

SELF-
CONSCIOUSNESS
AND
THE CRITIQUE OF
THE SUBJECT

HEGEL,
HEIDEGGER,
AND THE
POST-
STRUCTURALISTS

Simon Lumsden

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Hegel, Heidegger, and the Poststructuralists

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For Nina Ralph

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments xi

Abbreviations xv

INTRODUCTION

1

The Rise of Reason's Authority 2

The Metaphysics of Subjectivity 7

The Poststructuralist Reception of German Idealism 13

1. THE METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE AND THE WORLDLESS SUBJECT: HEIDEGGER'S CRITIQUE OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY

25

Descartes and the Rise of the Knowing Subject 26

Heidegger's Critique of Hegel 33

2. FICHTE'S STRIVING SUBJECT

38

Critique of Dogmatism 41

CONTENTS

“Review of <i>Aenesidemus</i> ”	43
Self-Positing, Acting, and Intellectual Intuition	47
The Check as a Realist Constraint	51
Striving, Normativity, and the Thing-in-Itself	57
The Unifying Function of Striving	60
 3. HEGEL: SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-DETERMINATION	 86
The Limits of Kant’s Epistemology	68
Hegel’s Critique of Fichte	78
Kant’s Subjectivism and the Promise of Apperception	84
Thought and Experience	88
The <i>Phenomenology</i> ’s Reorientation of Self-Consciousness	96
Spirit, Self-Determination, and Self-Consciousness	104
 4. HEIDEGGER, CARE, AND SELFHOOD	 110
<i>Das Man</i> and Inauthenticity	112
Anxiety, Individuation, and Authenticity	115
Care	121
Conscience and the Authentic Self	126
Hegel and Heidegger	132
 5. DERRIDA AND THE QUESTION OF SUBJECTIVITY	 138
The Heideggerian Background	140
Overcoming the Self-Present Subject	143
Derrida’s Challenge to the Unified Subject	145
Autonomy, Singularity, and Responsibility	149
The Destabilizing and Skeptical Role of Reason in Hegel’s Thought	158
Hegel’s Transformation of the Modern Subject	162
Singularity and Responsibility in Derrida and Hegel	171

CONTENTS

6. THE DIALECTIC AND TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICISM: DELEUZE'S CRITIQUE OF HEGEL

177

Sense-Experience and Individuation 179

Individuation and the Critique of the Subject 186

The Distorting Effects of Hegelian Negation 189

Hegelian Self-Consciousness and the Transcendental Empirical 193

The Reception of Kant's Legacy in Deleuze and Hegel 199

Hegel and the Dynamism of Modern Life 206

Self-World Relation 211

CONCLUSION

217

Notes 223

Bibliography 245

Index 255

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ABBREVIATIONS

References to and citations of frequently cited works are given parenthetically in text using the following abbreviations.

GILLES DELEUZE

- DR *Difference and Repetition*. Translated by Paul Patton. New York: Columbia University Press 1994. *Différence et répétition*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968. French page numbers follow page numbers from the English translation.
- NP *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Translated by Hugh Tomlinson. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983.

JACQUES DERRIDA

- GD *The Gift of Death*. Translated by David Wills. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.
- M *Margins of Philosophy*. Translated by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982.

ABBREVIATIONS

J. G. FICHTE

- EPW *Fichte: Early Philosophical Writings*. Translated and edited by Daniel Breazeale. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988.
- FTP *Foundations of Transcendental Philosophy: Wissenschaftslehre nova methodo*. Translated and edited by Daniel Breazeale. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992.
- IWL *Introductions to the Wissenschaftslehre, and Other Writings*. Translated and edited by Daniel Breazeale. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994.
- SK *The Science of Knowledge*. Translated and edited by John Lachs and Peter Heath. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.
- SW *Fichtes Werke*. Edited by I. H. Fichte. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1971. All references to this edition are followed by a number indicating the volume.

G. W. F. HEGEL

- DFS *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*. Translated by Henry S. Harris and Walter Cerf. Albany: SUNY Press, 1977.
- EnL *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline: Part 1: Science of Logic*. Translated and edited by Klaus Brinkmann and Daniel Dahlstrom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Hegel's Encyclopedia is organized by paragraphs (§), Remarks (R), and additions (Z).
- FK *Faith and Knowledge*. Translated by Henry S. Harris and Walter Cerf. Albany: SUNY Press, 1977.
- GW *Gesammelte Werke*. Edited by Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Reinhard Heede. Hamburg: Meiner, 1980–.
- PhS *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Translated by Terry Pinkard. Online draft: <http://terrypinkard.weebly.com/phenomenology-of-spirit-page.html>.

ABBREVIATIONS

- PR *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*. Translated by H. B. Nisbett and edited by Allen Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991. This work is organized by paragraphs (§), Remarks (R), and additions (Z).
- SL *The Science of Logic*. Translated by George di Giovanni. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.
- W *Werke*. Edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel. 20 volumes. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969.

MARTIN HEIDEGGER

- AWP “Age of the World Picture.” In *Off the Beaten Track*, translated by Kenneth Haynes and Julian Young, 57–85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- BP *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. Translated by Albert Hofstadter. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988.
- BT *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Oxford: Blackwell, 1962. *Sein und Zeit*. Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1953. All references are to the German pagination.
- HCT *History of the Concept of Time*. Translated by Theodore Kisiel. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985.
- GA *Gesamtausgabe*. Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1975. All references to this complete edition are followed by a number indicating the volume.

IMMANUEL KANT

- CPR *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated and edited by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS
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INTRODUCTION



ONE OF THE cornerstones of what has come to be known as post-structuralism is its critique of the subject. This subject emerges in Descartes's thought and reaches its pinnacle in German idealism, culminating in Hegel's absolute spirit. The poststructuralist critique centers on what is said to be the reflective and metaphysical character of subjectivity. On this view, Hegel is engaged in an anachronistic project of attempting to solve the residual problems in the critical philosophy by appeal to what is in effect a robust pre-Kantian metaphysics. This interpretation of Hegel stands in opposition, however, to a resurgence of interest in German idealist conceptions of subjectivity in the last twenty-five years, particularly in the work of Hegel but also in that of Fichte. One of the few things that unite much of the scholarship on these thinkers is the assertion that the character of subjectivity expressed in their work is antireflective. Moreover, if Hegel's project is said to be concerned with metaphysics at all—and many commentators have argued Hegel should be considered a nonmetaphysical thinker—then his metaphysics must be conceived as fundamentally post-Kantian.¹

If this latter assertion is correct, then the idea of Hegel as the grand master of the metaphysics of subjectivity, against which poststructuralism positions its own model of subjectivity, is founded on an interpretative error that

requires a reconsideration of the relation between German idealism and poststructuralism. Bringing together Hegel, stripped of the metaphysical weight poststructuralism has attributed to him, and the thought of Deleuze and Derrida opens the possibility for a very different kind of exchange between these two traditions than has been the case. This book is motivated by precisely such a concern. To bring these traditions together requires first understanding why poststructuralism takes German idealism to be both the fulfillment and the denouement of metaphysics. This story cannot be told without discussing the influence of Heidegger.² Heidegger's reading of the history of philosophy is the primary interpretative frame through which poststructuralism approaches the metaphysical trajectory of the history of philosophy. This explains why Hegel, at least for Deleuze and Derrida, is the confluence and culmination of all the problematic strains that run through modern philosophy. Before discussing why Heidegger positions Hegelian subjectivity as such a misguided path for philosophical inquiry, we need to first set Heidegger's and Hegel's thought in the context of the emergence of modern philosophy.

THE RISE OF REASON'S AUTHORITY

Max Weber in his famous introduction to *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* argued that the development of the Occident was a path of rationalization.³ How this culture of rationalization came to dominate Western society and undermine the emancipatory potential of modernity has been ever since the book's publication the mainstay of theorists from Lukács to Habermas. Weber argues that the monotheistic religions prepared the ground for Enlightenment rationality and the demystification of the world. Enlightenment rationality transformed the world in such a way that the orders of meaning that had sustained and animated traditional societies for millennia were no longer viable. Universal rationality, scientifically established empirical knowledge, and universal theories of morality and rights were incompatible with premodern shapes of life.

The Enlightenment developed in two distinct directions: on the one hand, the critical rationality that is the typical expression of the Enlightenment in the human sciences and, on the other hand, the scientific materialism of the empirical sciences. The tension between these two often conflicting paths left modernity in a perpetual state of crisis.

Stripped of any divinely ordained way in which it is meaningful, nature loses all meaning. Without teleology or divine order, nature is conceived purely as mechanism, that is, the result of causal forces. Mechanistic explanations sought to describe causality by virtue of a mathematical model derived from Newtonian physics. The great advantage of this approach was that the causality was measurable. The success of this model did eventually establish a new authority in the natural sciences. The romantic challenge to this orthodoxy, though important, could not be said to offer a counter to the authority of this tradition.⁴ The late-twentieth-century concern with the potential collapse of the natural environment has seen a resurgence of interest in romanticism and the beginnings, perhaps, of a wholesale challenge to the materialist ethos of much of the natural sciences. While the Enlightenment was persuasive in its rejection of the established orthodoxies in social, political, and religious life, it was not as successful in the human sciences as it had been in the natural sciences in producing a replacement authority. The great challenge of the Enlightenment project was to produce a unifying authority for rational critique; without this, the end result of its critique and disenchantment would be only skepticism. Only reason had the requisite unifying authority that could allow a new confidence in modern morality, judgment, and culture. For the early Enlightenment figures, the authority of reason was simply assumed. It had the explanatory resources to render intelligible every aspect of the human and natural world.

Enlightenment rationality appeared to develop in two conflicting directions: the naturalistic endeavors of the Enlightenment tied reason to causality and materialism; by contrast, critical rationality appeared to have no material basis. Attempts to describe the uniqueness of rationality risked reenchanting the human mind; its immateriality made it prone to appearing as a gift from God. Even more problematic was any project seeking to explain the human mind on the basis of materialism. The realization of such

an ambition would render inert the distinctively human capacity for self-determination. We are left with a conflict between two competing concepts of Enlightenment reason—causal materialism and a nonmaterial rational mind. This conflict runs through early modern philosophy from Descartes to Locke. It is not until Kant that the problem of the authority of reason was directly confronted. Despite the Enlightenment's critical momentum, its masthead—reason—remained an article of faith. Kant's critical philosophy begins the demystification of reason itself.⁵

Kant's critical project confronted what appeared to be the blind spot of the Enlightenment: its uncritical attitude toward reason. The established traditions of premodern societies had been unsettled by Enlightenment thought; beliefs, norms, and values could no longer be justified on the basis of an organic continuance of tradition. The only viable authority to replace God and tradition was reason. To fulfill this role, Kant had to demonstrate that reason by its own resources could reflectively establish its own authority. The broad question Kant asks is whether or not reason can be self-grounding. As we have seen, the demystifying project of the Enlightenment, for all its claims to be able to liberate human civilization from various forms of dogmatism, did not have a basis on which it could secure its own claims. The Enlightenment, with its demand that the subject be self-determining, permanently dislodged humanity from any secure mooring in culture, tradition, and religion. Human life was set in motion and only reason could provide a new home for the modern subject. Reason was assumed to have an unbridled capacity to know the order of nature and in the moral and political realm to establish what one ought to do or the ideal form of government. The power of reason was in effect limitless. However, the way rationality was conceived in early modern philosophy led down two unsatisfactory paths: skepticism or materialism. Reason had to show that these were not viable alternatives. Reason had therefore to be aware of its limitations or else be self-contradictory: a rational authority that led to skepticism or to materialist causality was self-undermining. It was only when the limits of reason were articulated that it could then establish and affirm the basic categories of judgment and thought.

From Kant onward, the issue of whether or not reason could legitimate itself became the key to the viability of the Enlightenment project. The legitimation issue is a complex one and in some sense can be said to define the program of modern philosophy.⁶ Some of these issues will be examined throughout this work. All we need note here is Kant's broad aim: that reason and the concepts and norms which it develops have to be self-grounding, that is, they have to be able to legitimate themselves without appeal to anything *beyond* their human determination (a transcendent realm of ideas or the materiality of the world). This program is not simply an arcane concern to establish a rigorous metaphysics; it has at its center a commitment to human freedom. Fichte and Hegel largely accept the idea of self-determined freedom (the concept underwriting the Enlightenment and the critical project); nevertheless, resolving the paradoxes and problems that beset Kant's formulation of autonomy was instrumental in the development of post-Kantian idealism.⁷ As will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6 and briefly below, the response of figures such as Derrida and Deleuze to the expanded version of self-determination that Hegel develops to correct deficiencies in the critical project becomes central to the establishment of the distinct philosophical program of poststructuralism.

For all the Enlightenment's radicalism, it held a conception of the natural world remarkably similar to that of traditional metaphysics: there was an ordered whole whose nature reason alone could disclose. It is the methodological, ethical, and metaphysical features of that whole that poststructuralism contests. German idealism transforms the Enlightenment project, incorporating the concerns of romanticism into its own endeavors. Despite German idealism's innovations, poststructuralism considers it to be the culmination of all the problematic preoccupations of traditional metaphysics. Derrida and Deleuze, who will be the main focus of my discussion of poststructuralism, argue that German idealism does not abandon the idea of an ordered whole but simply reorients this metaphysical perspective from the object to the subject. Moreover, German idealists like Hegel posit the identity of subject and object. The way German idealism conceived reason, the

absolute, and the whole, as well as their legitimation, was achieved either by excluding difference, singularity, and otherness or by making these notions features of identity. Romanticism had of course raised a number of concerns regarding Enlightenment rationality that are forerunners to those of poststructuralism. Schelling, Jacobi, and other figures in the romantic tradition challenged the Kantian claim that reason could ground itself as well as the wider Enlightenment claim that reason was the sole source of intelligible explanations of the world.⁸ The defining problem for romanticism was to show that human self-determination and rational explanation were *not* the exclusive ways in which human nature and the world could be understood. While romanticism presented a systematic and powerful critique of the Enlightenment, poststructuralism does not appeal to it in any comprehensive way as a reference for its own critique of Enlightenment and idealist thought.⁹

While romanticism is critical of Kant—and indeed its reception of and response to Fichte is central to its philosophical identity—it nevertheless accepts many of the philosophical innovations of Kant’s critical philosophy: empiricism, for example, was dismissed on the basis that the immediacy of the senses could not form the basis of knowledge.¹⁰ Romanticism, however, also contested many of the core ideas of the Kantian program. Its account of human experience, the natural world, society, and state was consistently positioned against Kant’s and Fichte’s thought. Nevertheless, romanticism appealed neither to a given natural order nor to a predetermined social harmony as the metaphysical authority for their claims. The focus of the romantic critique of Kant concentrated on his notion of autonomy. Conceiving freedom exclusively in terms of a rational self-determining subject was a limited and narrow conception of freedom. Autonomy, because it centered on the legitimation of norms and action through the individual’s use of reason, alienated individuals from their community; pure reason and self-legislated freedom are pursued at the price of belonging and being at home. This, of course, does not mean that romanticism desires to give up reason, reflection, and critique. Schlegel, Schelling, and Novalis maintained the rational and reflective impetus of Kant but in a way that did not lead to alienation from tradition, culture, and nature.¹¹ The romantic aesthetic and

political program theorized conceptions of home and what it is to live a harmonious life as a way of overcoming this alienation. One of the ways it did this was by appealing to and stressing the importance of the variety of nonrational forms of existence that are central to human life. Commitments to a vast array of norms and values, as well as many of our practices and habits, are central to how we orient ourselves in the world. The vast majority of these nonrational “commitments” are not rationally chosen or even retrospectively validated through acts of rational self-legitimation.¹² Kantian and Enlightenment thought appeared to dismiss forms of life that did not have their basis in rational principles.

Romanticism, as has been said, is not a tradition that poststructuralism explicitly appeals to in support of its philosophical claims or its critique of Enlightenment rationality; nevertheless, many of romanticism’s philosophical and aesthetic concerns are continuous with poststructuralism. The romantic appeal to homecoming has a conservative political import: striving to reclaim human belonging by aligning the individual to the nation-state and tradition.¹³ Poststructuralism would contest this strategy as a viable or desirable corrective to the homelessness of modernity. Romanticism shares much with poststructuralist thought: irony, plurality, skepticism about progress and self-determination, and a sensitivity to the nonrational character of much decision making (embodied in and motivated by tradition and community more than rational choices).¹⁴ Heidegger’s project takes up many romantic themes. His thought is key to understanding the poststructuralist critique of modern philosophy and especially its critique of Hegel.

THE METAPHYSICS OF SUBJECTIVITY

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard extended romanticism’s critique of the Enlightenment. Their critiques of modernity put forward powerful alternatives to the authority of reason. They were the first to cogently challenge the thread of historical continuity

that modernity had assumed. Nietzsche's thought was instrumental in the establishment of the poststructuralist critique of traditional metaphysics and Enlightenment rationality. The development of poststructuralism's specific modes of questioning and the philosophical form it adopted were also influenced by Nietzsche. Nietzsche's thought provided Derrida and Deleuze with a systematic and far-reaching analysis of the limits of the philosophical tradition. It also offered a clear path for how philosophy might regenerate itself once it was put back on track. However, even though Nietzsche's thought is central to the philosophical programs of poststructuralism, it is the contention of this book that Heidegger's interpretation of the history of Western metaphysics is the most potent influence on Deleuze's and Derrida's interpretation of the philosophical tradition.¹⁵ Heidegger's influence is most pronounced in Derrida's work; Deleuze acknowledges the influence but the self-conscious appeal to Heidegger as an authority and as his heir is much less explicit.¹⁶ Both, however, adopt Heidegger's critique of the subject. Why this critique is so influential is something I wish to briefly explore before taking it up in more detail in chapter 1.

That there is crisis in human subjectivity is one of the givens of contemporary continental philosophy. This crisis has its genesis in the comprehensive undermining of modern subjectivity that was initiated on three fronts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (by Nietzsche and Freud, structuralism, and Heidegger). While Deleuze and Derrida respond to the perceived subjectivism of the philosophical tradition in different ways, in both cases it is an orienting frame through which they conceive their relation to the philosophical tradition.¹⁷ The first sustained incarnation of the critique of the subject was in the thought of Nietzsche and Freud. Both of these figures interrogate the self-reflective character of Descartes's founding subject. They question the fundamental claim that a subject could understand itself transparently. Freud and Nietzsche argue that determinations of subjectivity such as libidinal forces are elemental to human subjectivity, but of these one could have neither transparent understanding nor could they be conceived as self-determined achievements.

The second influence on the destabilizing of the modern subject is structuralism, which argues that the self-determining subject of modernity is

not the center of semantic authority. Linguistic structures are the primary determination of meaning, and the singular subject could not be considered to be in any sense the origin or the determiner of these structures. The upshot of this is that structuralism replaces the subject with semantic fields as the primary site of meaning. This shift from subject to semantic structures did not however challenge the underwriting logic of metaphysics. The basic metaphysical assumption—that there is a given way in which the world is (a fixed, unified, and coherent structure) that can be understood only if one employed the correct scientific method—was not challenged by this decentering of the subject. Structuralism in a sense simply shifts the focus from subject to object without actually correcting the defects of metaphysics. The modern self-determining subject is simply replaced with a new center that still serves as a structuring locus of all meaning. Structuralism's response to the metaphysics of subjectivity—that linguistic systems are the authoritative determiner of meaning—was for these reasons unsatisfactory for poststructuralism. The poststructuralist challenge goes to the heart of metaphysics itself, challenging the notion of systematicity and the very idea that there could be a determining unified center to any meaning system.¹⁸

Nietzsche, Freud, and important figures in structuralism such as Saussure are instrumental in the development of the poststructuralist critique of the subject.¹⁹ However, why the critique of the subject is a defining theme for poststructuralism cannot be explained without examining Heidegger's critique of the metaphysics of presence. Poststructuralism's critique of the metaphysics of subjectivity, as well as why it in particular considers Hegel to be the figure who expresses this mode of thought in its most extreme form, is the direct result of Heidegger's critique of Western metaphysics. A central theme in his thought, which will be examined in chapter 1, is the way in which the modern subject emerges and why this initiates a defective line of philosophical development. His analysis of metaphysics, notably its overlooking of the question of the meaning of being, is directly related to the modern formulation of subjectivity. The phrase "metaphysics of subjectivity" is, in poststructuralism, shorthand for the inadequacies and limitations of philosophy. Ironically, as we will see in chapter 3, Hegel's critique of Kant and Fichte is also based on their metaphysics of subjectivity.

Being and Time, among many other things, is a unique, brilliant, and evocative analysis of human existence. The text is a phenomenological analysis of human life, though it does not aim to be in any sense an encyclopedic examination of the diversity of human existence, that is, with complex forms of sociality, culture, and politics. Its distinctive approach to the analysis of Dasein understands Dasein above all as a questioner of the meaning of being. Putting philosophy on the correct path to fundamental ontology and the appropriate analysis of human existence first necessitates demonstrating how previous philosophy has failed to understand being and why therefore it ought to be swept aside in favor of fundamental ontology. As will be discussed in chapter 1, being, in premodern philosophy, is predominantly conceived as substance. Substance in this context refers to the way in which entities or beings are in themselves. Premodern metaphysics conceived everything as the expression of an underlying substance.

Descartes's thought is supposed to mark a new beginning by placing the locus of truth not in the way things are in themselves, but rather in the thinking of the subject. The retrospective description of the founding of modern philosophy presents Descartes's thought as a decisive break with all previous philosophy. Doubt, the foundational cogito, and his scientific method mark the modern era of philosophy. All earlier philosophy, because it did not adopt such a rigorous examination of its assumptions, was deemed limited and dogmatic. Heidegger does not accept this narrative: Descartes's thought does not mark a decisive break from his predecessors. "Descartes' basic ontological concepts are drawn directly from Suarez, Duns Scotus, and Thomas Aquinas" (BP 124). Descartes did not inaugurate a revolution in philosophy, since he did not challenge prior ontology. His innovation is more appropriately described as a reorienting of philosophical perspective. *Subjectum* (*hupokeimenon*) prior to Descartes meant the subject of an assertion. *Subjectum* did not thereby have any direct relation to a thinking self. Descartes's decisive innovation was identifying *subjectum* with the knowing subject, a subject that, as modern philosophy progresses, comes increasingly to be considered as determining the meaning of being.

The founding act of modern philosophy was to start with the ego: "The motive of this primary orientation toward the subject in modern philosophy

is the option that this being which we ourselves are is given to the knower first and as the only certain thing, that the subject is accessible immediately and with absolute certainty, that it is better known than all objects" (BP 123). Descartes's cogito begins this transition toward the authority of self-consciousness. Kant does not shy away from this orientation toward the subject; indeed, his thought proceeds by laying out in extraordinary detail the conditions for this subjectivity, the conditions of its knowing, thought, and experience. Kant's examination of the formal structure of subjectivity has two effects: it entrenches the subject as the center of philosophy and establishes this subject's primary orientation of the world as knowing. Heidegger argues that Hegel extends Kant's program by making the subject equal to substance.

The cogito realigns the relation of subject to object by positioning the subject as the center of experience, thought, and meaning. The cogito also inaugurates representationalism, the form of thought Heidegger considers to be modern. "To represent means here: of oneself, to set something before one and to make what has been set in place secure as thus set in place" (AWP 82). Representational thought assumes an external world that is other to the subject, that is put before the mind by virtue of its cognition. Representations or ideas (*Vorstellungen*) that the subject has of objects are mental states that are owned and bound to the subject.²⁰ The widespread acceptance of representational thought is, however, largely the result of Kant's thought. Kant's account of the self-world relation places the knowing subject at the very center of the universe. Every act of representing is an "I represent," each judging an "I judge," each willing an "I will." The "I think," "me cogitare," is always corepresented even though it is not held in mind expressly and explicitly. Kant adopts this (Cartesian) definition of the ego as *res cogitans* in the sense of "cogito me cogitare" except that he formulates it in a more fundamental ontological sense (BP 126).

Kant's thought, for all its promise, is plagued by a persistent Cartesianism, as this passage makes clear. The representational view of mind is not simply an account of how objects are brought before the mind; it assumes that the primary relation of the subject to the object is epistemological. The opening sections of *Being and Time* criticize Descartes for understanding

the subject-object relation exclusively as knower and known. This prejudice is appropriated by Kant and his successors. The defining elements of the subject—reason, thought, and judgment—come to reside in the knowing subject and not in being. While Heidegger's view of Kant is not simply condemnatory, in the end, at least in the development of the metaphysics of subjectivity, he is but a transitional figure to Hegel.

Kant's transcendental unity of apperception develops this "me cogitare" aspect of the cogito in which the representing activity is always a corepresenting, that is, all thinking and representing is an "I-think." The central role of apperception in the development of Hegel's thought will be addressed throughout this work. In Heidegger's critique of Kant, he argues that apperception structures human cognition in such a manner that the object does not contribute anything significant to experience. Because the transcendental unity of apperception is the guiding structure of the ego, objectivity—what can be known of any object—"relates not to objects but *to the concepts* that determine the being of beings" (BP 128, my emphasis). Hegel takes this discursive prejudice to a higher level. His thought does more than conceive being as something made present to the subject purely as a form known by the subject. The very subjectivism of this process is the focus of the project of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Heidegger argues that Hegel concentrates on the knowing of the subject itself as the condition of all subjectivity. This knowledge of its own knowing comes to be understood as the condition of all objectivity. This is what absolute knowing is, that is, "true being is the thinking that thinks itself absolutely."²¹ The significance of such claims will be examined throughout this work. All that needs noting here is that Heidegger's diagnosis of the philosophical tradition and the Hegelian subject is adopted by poststructuralism and is mirrored in their own critique of the philosophical tradition and especially of Hegel.

The phrase "metaphysics of the subject" has become an abbreviation for the trajectory of modern philosophy by which, as Heidegger describes it, objects come to be defined as substance, a substance that is determined only in relation to a knowing I. This model of subjectivity is the ground on which the concepts of modern philosophy, such as spontaneity and self-determination,

are constructed. Poststructuralism presents an image of Hegelian thought as the apotheosis of all the systematizing and subjectivizing tendencies of Western metaphysics. Deleuze and Derrida in their own unique styles describe the metaphysical endeavor from Descartes to Hegel as dogmatic and restrictive because it conceives being, difference, and thought only in terms of a limited set of concepts to which it demands the external world conform. Because it can recognize in what is other to it only what the subject has produced and imposed upon the world, it is, they argue, cut off from the empirical world and genuine difference.

THE POSTSTRUCTURALIST RECEPTION OF GERMAN IDEALISM

Poststructuralist hostility to Hegel also has a biographical origin. The extraordinary importance of Hegel for the development of philosophy in France from the 1920s to the 1950s is described in the influential work by Vincent Descombes *Modern French Philosophy*.²² Descombes argues that Alexander Kojève's famous lectures on Hegel's *Phenomenology* were a seminal influence on the emergence of key intellectual developments in France. Jean Wahl's and Jean Hyppolite's interpretations of Hegel were also important in ensuring that Hegel was at the center of philosophical inquiry in France in the aftermath of the Second World War.²³ At the time that Deleuze and Derrida were preparing for their *agrégation* examinations in philosophy, interpreting the canonical texts in the history of philosophy was in effect doing philosophy. Hyppolite, who taught them both, wrote many important and scholarly works on German idealism, but it is his *Logic and Existence* that has a critical role in the development of poststructuralism.²⁴ In this work, his previously orthodox Hegelianism is moderated and he offers some reservations about Hegel's system. These reservations may have given his young students license to break free from the oppressive Hegelianism of the era. There is also an element of needing to free oneself not just from the master discourse but from the master in

Deleuze's and Derrida's critique of Hegel. Deleuze's early interest in the empiricist thought of Hume could certainly be seen as a desire to break free not just from German idealism but also from Hyppolite. Heidegger's critique of the history of Western metaphysics provided further impetus to their own rejection of the "father." I have already briefly discussed Heidegger's claim that the modern subject is a corruption of the original sense of subject and how Descartes, Kant, and Hegel restrict subjectivity to an exclusively epistemological relation.

Human self-awareness had been understood by early modern philosophy primarily as a form of self-reflection. Classical empiricist and rationalist accounts of the mind argued there was no direct experience of objects, only impressions or ideas that point to the things beyond the mind that are represented. In this pre-Kantian metaphysics, we are not first aware of objects and then aware that our own intentionality, self-awareness, and the experience are simultaneous. While this approach may not permit direct experience of objects, the self, however, is something that is directly experienced. Self-consciousness on this model distinguishes subject (I) and object (self), but the former directly apprehends the latter. This conception of self-consciousness led philosophy down a not-overly-productive path. Recognizing the self as itself would appear to require a prior familiarity with self. What could such an antecedent familiarity possibly be? As we will see in chapter 2, avoiding this apparent paradox was central to the development of Fichte's notion of a self-positing I. However, Kant was confronted with the problem of how the I could provide the reflective conditions for its own self-awareness.

Kant argues that there are no given objects of experience, neither an external object nor an inner self. He takes an entirely different approach to the problem of self-consciousness. "The transcendental unity of apperception" was his response to the deficiencies of earlier accounts of self-consciousness. Kant's subject is unified and is identical throughout all its acts of representation. It can hold together over time its experiences, judgments, and representations because it is transcendental, that is, our individual experiences are grounded in a prior synthesis that "produces the representation I think, which must be able to accompany all others and which in all

consciousness is one and the same" (CPR B132). This is the condition that allows unification of all representations such that they can be said to be mine. Kantian self-consciousness does not thereby assume an inner object (self) of which the I is aware. It is not our concern here to unpack the complex and contested notion of apperception; what is at issue is the spontaneity that lies at the heart of Kantian self-consciousness. Kantian experience is grounded in the fundamental activity of the mind. Rather than a direct apprehension of objects or some kind of complex story about how ideas are related to one another, objects of experience are conceived only on the basis of human mindedness since there is no other access finite beings could have to objects.²⁵

The notion of spontaneity (the activity of the human mind) is appropriated and expanded by Fichte and Hegel. However, they were not persuaded by Kant's account of how the content of experience was delivered passively by the senses, which seemed to undermine the basic idea of apperceptive self-consciousness. They were confronted with the problem of how to think the relation of concept to intuition such that it did not dichotomize the sensory and the discursive. Their response was to enlarge the sphere of the discursive such that it was responsible for far more of experience than Kant could envisage. By so doing, Fichte and Hegel essentially stripped Kant's thought of its last vestige of representationalism. Hegel abandoned completely the project of attempting to show how passively delivered content unites with concepts. Attempting to answer this question was fruitless: the sensory world has no explanatory potential. All explanation and intelligibility are discursive and must be understood as issuing from self-determining subjects.

Hegel's appeal to spontaneity is not primarily concerned with the autonomy of an individual subject, though he does not dispute the reflective capacity to correct, modify, or reject one's norms and commitments. Hegel expands the focus from the self-determined character of the individual to the self-determination of spirit itself. His examination takes place on two fronts: firstly, he is concerned to map out, as we will see in chapter 3, the way history, thought, and culture collectively establish a form of life and why such forms of life collapse. Secondly, he analyses the conditions, norms, and

concepts by which individual changes of self-understanding are possible, that is, how a subject is able to change its understanding and realign its commitments to a different norm. The notion of spirit as self-determined develops Kant's founding insight that reason must be understood as reflectively determining its own norms by virtue of its capacity for self-correction precisely because it cannot appeal to a transcendent realm of ideas, such as a Platonic idea or a thing-in-itself, to justify its claims. Hegel describes this spirit as pure self-movement (PhS §32/GW9 25). The standard metaphysical conception of Hegel, hopefully now outdated, understood Hegel's notion of a self-producing spirit to refer to a theodicy in which a previously alienated mind and world are reconciled because in the end the subject comes to recognize itself as an expression of some Godlike substance. The notion of a self-producing spirit, in contrast to this view, is designed to present the varied ways meaning is transformed and developed in human culture. Spirit, in this sense, has been described as the sociality of reason, a notion that is meant to describe the diverse ways in which norms are created, as well as the complex recognitive structures (intersubjective, linguistic, and institutional) by which subjects hold themselves and others to norms. Self-producing or self-moving spirit is therefore meant to capture the way in which these structures of human existence are collective human achievements.²⁶

There is a further dimension to Hegel's conception of a self-producing spirit that needs addressing. As we saw in the opening section, the Enlightenment for all its radicalism was unable to find a way to make the modern subject at home in the world. Romanticism recognized this as a limitation of Enlightenment thought and sought to overcome the human opposition to nature and the disenchanted world it bequeathed. The desire for reconciliation and to be at home in the world is a powerful idea in Hegel's thought; but in contrast to romanticism, he presents a form of social and political life that embraces, with some well-documented reservations, modernity. As we have seen, while Hegel largely accepts the Kantian notion of autonomy, he considered it limited as an expression of human freedom. Kantian autonomy is largely disembodied: it does not occur in a shape of life and does

not have a complementary culture or political institutions that autonomous individuals could recognize as objective expressions of their individual freedom. Hegel's *Phenomenology* and the *Philosophy of Right*, as will be discussed in chapter 6, address this isolation of the individual. These works show, among many other things, how the self-determining subject emerges and ultimately finds its home in an adequate form of life. The way Hegel charts self-determining spirit makes it impossible to conceive of autonomy as an isolated subject. It is the product of a form of life. Such forms of life include the full diversity of human existence: thought, norms, concepts, anthropology, psychology, and social and political institutions, as well as our affective and emotional life. Many of these aspects of human life were absent from the Kantian account of freedom.

Systemic problems with Kant's notion of autonomy and experience form the guiding concerns of his successors. Schulze and Maimon were leading figures in the early reception of Kant's critical philosophy; they were also his most astute and influential critics.²⁷ It can be argued that German idealism is inaugurated by the distinctive way in which Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel responded to Schulze's and Maimon's criticisms of the critical philosophy.²⁸ The challenge that figures such as Maimon posed to Kant's critical philosophy was also influential on Deleuze. Deleuze considers the response of Hegel and Fichte to Maimon's critique of Kant to have been completely insufficient.²⁹ Maimon claimed that Kant's division of cognition into two distinct faculties, understanding and sensibility (the latter being dependent on a passively delivered sensory manifold), established a dualism. Once a division is posited between the given content of intuition and our discursive capacities, a unified cognition is no longer possible since how the two connect is not explained. The complex terrain of the concept/intuition distinction in Kant's thought is discussed at length in chapter 3.³⁰ All that needs to be noted now is Maimon's claim that the *Critique of Pure Reason* establishes a dualism between the empirical and the discursive that is not resolvable. Deleuze argues that Hegel, rather than solving the challenge of unifying the discursive and the empirical that Maimon sets, simply excises the empirical from experience and cognition. As we will see in chapter 6, Deleuze rises to

Maimon's challenge and, in response to Hegel, reclaims the importance of the empirical for philosophy, though it is a form of empiricism that is radically distinct from classical empiricism.

Poststructuralism does not consider the idea that Hegel could be a post-Kantian thinker.³¹ Rather than extending Kant's critique of metaphysics, Hegel's thought is a reversion to precritical metaphysics. The Enlightenment disenchantment of nature and the overturning of all established orthodoxies were not radical philosophical innovations if an omniscient God was exchanged for an absolute subject. Hegel's self-determining subject or spirit is, on this view, the primary determiner of all that can be considered meaningful. The way it is conceived, through the negative, science, and dialectic, excludes any alternative forms of experience and institutes an oppressive uniformity that is as dogmatic as pre-Enlightenment metaphysics. Positioning the subject as the axis of all meaning diminishes the immediate, excludes the unmediated singular (Deleuze), makes difference unthinkable (Derrida), and restrains any dissenting histories other than the monolithic order of history that originates in the autonomous subject.³²

For poststructuralism, the pathway of modern philosophy represents the ascendancy of self-consciousness from the cogito to Hegel's absolute knowing. The rise of self-consciousness brings with it a commensurate truncation of experience. Poststructuralism challenges the putative linear uniformity of the development of philosophy, as well as the distinctive concepts it develops. Modern philosophy develops a rigid hierarchy of concepts and schematic methods of thinking, such as the dialectic, that suppress all forms of experience and all conceptions of the self-world relation. Singularity, difference, and multiplicity are vanquished along spirit's self-correcting journey to absolute self-consciousness. As we have seen, Hegel represents for poststructuralism the culmination and distillation of all the flaws of Western metaphysics. Heidegger's thought is the structuring narrative through which poststructuralism interprets the history of philosophy. The metaphysics of presence, which poststructuralist adopts from Heidegger, is the term he uses to capture the entire development of Western philosophy. The metaphysics of presence, as will be discussed in chapter 1, is the tendency

to understand being as an enduring substance. In modern philosophy, substance is conceived as something known by a subject and ultimately, with Hegel, subject becomes equal to substance. Hegel's absolute knowing, on this view, is the culmination of the metaphysics of presence since it presents a complete understanding of the conditions of self-consciousness and an identity of self-consciousness with the whole.

Derrida and Deleuze conceive the form Hegel gives to the movement of thought, his dialectical method, to be a constraint on thought. The negative, which is the philosophical laborer of the dialectic, presents thought exclusively as oppositions and contradictions that are sublated (*aufgehoben*) into higher forms of thought. Poststructuralism positions the dialectic as a concise marker of differentiation between its own project and Hegel's. Deleuze describes it like this: "Hegelian contradiction . . . consists in inscribing the double negation of *non*-contradiction within the existent in such a way that identity . . . is sufficient to think the existent as such" (DR 49/70). These "logical monsters" convert all difference to identity by a process of internalization, the consequence of which is that the knowing subject recognizes difference only as an expression of itself. Hegel's identification of concept and self-consciousness establishes its identity with the world, since the concepts with which it cognizes the world are simply its own. As Derrida puts it, Hegel's thought is "a logos which hears-itself-speak, a logos which is as close as possible to itself in the unity of concept and consciousness" (M 73).

Hegel is not, Deleuze argues, in any sense the heir of the critical project. The dialectic is a reactive force that is happy to reconcile itself "with any kind of power, with church or state." When the dialectic, "the reactive man," and its suite of concepts—"reason, spirit, self-consciousness and man"—reappropriate reactive determinations, "is it thought critique has made great progress? . . . What right has [man] to undertake a critique?" (NP 88). The anthropocentrism of Kant's critical philosophy sent the critical philosophy down a path that made it incapable of harnessing any truly active powers. Derrida's discussion of the dialectic raises many of the same criticisms. In *Margins of Philosophy* and *Writing and Difference*, the dialectic is described as an organizing methodology for man's subjugation of

otherness (M 121). Derrida explicitly defines his most important notion, *différance*, in opposition to sublation (*Aufhebung*): “if there were a definition of *différance*, it would be precisely the limit, the interruption of the Hegelian *relève* [sublation] wherever it operates.”³³ Sublation is a term of art Hegel devised to capture the dialectical movement of the negative. The negative pushes things to the point of contradiction and reason resolves the isolated moments into a unity. The movement of sublation, Derrida argues, overcomes contradiction by suppressing otherness and organizing differences into an elaborate and totalizing system. *Différance* by contrast aspires to conceive of something other to thought that is unable to be incorporated into the monolithic movement of the negative. It challenges the established dualisms, such as the sensible and the intelligible, that philosophy employs to arrange and comprehend the world and human thought. *Différance* resists the relentless logic of modern thought, of which the dialectic is the self-conscious expression.

Derrida does not conceive *différance* as an innovation that would correct philosophy and put it on the right path in the way that, for example, Heidegger in *Being and Time* strives to do. *Différance* is also not a concept or the basis of a system that might, for example, correct some error in the history of philosophy or make it adequate to its foundational or scientific aspiration. It is none of these things; Derrida shuns the very idea of providing a new metaphysics in which man could be at home. As will be discussed in chapter 5, *différance* and the other central concepts of deconstruction (singularity, trace, play) that are central to the broad project of deconstruction have a quasi-transcendental function insofar as they are conditions for meaning. They are only quasi-transcendental, because even though they are conditions for meaning, they are unable to be made present. That is, Derrida has accepted Heidegger’s critique of the metaphysics of presence; accordingly, the core concepts of deconstruction are not an architectonic that is knowable in a manner that could simply be laid bare. These terms are conceived in a manner that makes them unstable and temporally deferred, which means that while they are posited as conditions of thinking and experience, they are not transparently accessible to consciousness. One can see therefore the strategic importance of Nietzsche for Deleuze and Derrida, as well as, most

famously, for Foucault. Nietzsche is a dissenting voice, since he develops a pathway for thought that makes no claim to universality or the systematic organization of knowledge. Nevertheless, his alternative is a comprehensive mode of philosophical inquiry. Moreover, the form of his philosophical inquiry marks itself as a useful template for poststructuralism, since it is playful and ironic but also penetratingly critical. This form allows Nietzsche to engage with the problems of philosophy in a manner that resists their incorporation into a schematic metaphysical system.

As will be discussed throughout this book, Hegel is misrepresented and misunderstood by Deleuze and Derrida. A vast array of research in the humanities has fallen under the sway of their thought and, from them, has adopted a view of Hegel that prevents either any ongoing engagement with Hegel in his own right or a sustained examination of German idealism and poststructuralism. This book focuses on Deleuze and Derrida and does not discuss Foucault, despite the extraordinary relevance of his critique of reflexive forms of subjectivity. My concern in this book is with Deleuze and Derrida since they have contested most explicitly the logic of German idealism and have adopted Heidegger's analysis of the metaphysics of presence as the basis of their critique of Hegel. The orthodox poststructuralist account of Hegel presents his system as one in which the dialectic excises all otherness or transforms it into concepts in order to facilitate the theodicy of self-consciousness. The character of their criticism of Hegel—as the apotheosis of all the failings of Western metaphysics—has cast a long shadow over the possibility of a productive encounter between these two traditions. To hopelessly abbreviate one of the most complex thinkers in the history of philosophy: Hegel's thought can be understood as having two primary concerns. Firstly, his project is one of self-comprehension. He examines the diverse historical, social, and discursive conditions that explain why a shape of life understands itself in the way that it does and how such shapes of life collapse. Secondly, he is concerned to provide modern self-understanding with a philosophical form that is adequate to this shape of life. These two aspirations contain many contentious attendant claims: the self-correcting character of history; that the self-correction is the progressive realization

of freedom; that the sociopolitical institutions of Western Europe in the early nineteenth century established the conditions for the highest satisfaction of human freedom; and that the norms and concepts by which we understand every aspect of existence must be considered collective human achievements.

Despite these assumptions, or perhaps because of them, Hegel does not aspire to exchange man for God. His concern is primarily to chart philosophically the way in which forms of human self-understanding and shapes of life lose their relevance, become irrational, and transform into new shapes of life. Hegel constructs a highly complex and systematic web of concepts through which these themes are examined. Moreover, given the fundamental concern of the critical philosophy (that thought should critically examine all its presuppositions), his philosophical enterprise had to be science. This attempt to be rigorous and internally consistent does not however make his project totalizing or driven by various defective psychopathologies. Hegel's project has to be understood as a response to the defining set of problems that plagued the reception of Kant's thought. If these concerns are properly understood, along with the full breadth of his historical preoccupations, then the poststructuralist interpretation of Hegel is misguided.

Knowledge is dependent on conditions that, Hegel argues, have been produced through collective effort over the course of human history. Norms, values, and concepts must be understood as collectively self-determined. Such a conception of self-determining spirit, as will be discussed in chapter 3, was required to resolve the Kantian dualism of concept and intuition. While this is not the space to examine the importance of resolving this dualism for post-Kantian thought, what is worth noting is that conceiving the whole as essentially self-determining was the only corrective to a division that appeared to result in an absolute separation of human mindedness from the empirical world. To conceive of the whole as fundamentally discursive was the only possibility for reconnecting mind and world. While the essential norms and concepts of a form of life are collective human achievements, these norms are only comprehended at the point at which they begin to lose their hold on a culture. Philosophical comprehension

arrives at the moment that a culture's animating concepts show themselves to be discordant with what a form of life is becoming. At such points in history, those concepts can no longer be appealed to as unquestioned reasons to justify an action or judgment. The norms that are constitutive of human self-understanding are transformed through the diverse elements of a form of life. Given the self-transforming character of forms of life, then the conditions of subjectivity and of human cognition cannot be understood to be fixed. While the development of norms is prospective (ceaselessly moving forward), the comprehension of them is retrospective. The result is that there is always a dissonance between what we are becoming and what we comprehend.

Hegel's critique of Fichte—that his $I = I$ results in a metaphysics of subjectivity—shares a striking resemblance to the criticisms that poststructuralism raises against Hegel. How Hegel seeks to correct the deficiencies of Fichte's self-identical subject is very different from poststructuralism's response to what it takes to be Hegel's self-identical subject. It is, however, the contention of this book that once the significance of Hegel's response to the problems that beset Kant's critical philosophy is understood, a philosophical dialogue between Hegel and poststructuralism becomes possible. To date, such an exchange has not taken place.³⁴ Despite the need for such an exchange, there is an element of the poststructuralist critique of Hegel that is accurate. Hegel's project seeks to comprehend the discursive and historical conditions that have forged the self-understanding of modernity. He is concerned with providing modernity with a philosophy that is adequate to it. Hegel's grand claim is that he can comprehend definitively the animating concepts of modernity. While the project of modernity may have run its course and the limitation of its essential concepts (self-determination and autonomy) may have disclosed themselves, these concepts are not, however, relics from a shape of life that has passed. It is their adequacy to the contemporary world that is contested. The relation of poststructuralism to these modern concepts is appropriately ambiguous and playful: they cannot be abandoned because they are not anachronistic, but nevertheless their legitimacy and their hold on contemporary life are no longer definitive. Poststructuralism looks to

INTRODUCTION

alternative potentialities for the transformation of philosophy. The singular, the radical empirical, *différance*, and so on interrupt the coherence of modern attempts at self-explanation. This discordance, irony, and dislocation present perhaps a philosophical self-comprehension that is adequate to contemporary life.

1

THE METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE AND THE WORLDLESS SUBJECT

Heidegger's Critique of Modern Philosophy

In this way the illusion comes to prevail that everything man encounters exists only insofar as it is his construct. This illusion gives rise to one final delusion: it seems as though man everywhere and always only encounters himself. . . . In truth, however, precisely nowhere does man today any longer encounter himself i.e. his essence.¹

HEIDEGGER WROTE EXTENSIVELY on German idealism throughout his career and his relationship to it has a number of phases. At some stages, he takes Hegel's and Fichte's thought to be the end of metaphysics and the pinnacle of every problematic tendency in modern philosophy. At other times, his approach is far more nuanced. The concern of this chapter is not to flesh out the various changes of attitude that Heidegger adopts toward German idealism—this has been done admirably well elsewhere²—but rather to re-create the narrative by which German idealism comes to be understood as the metaphysics of subjectivity. Understanding why this view of German idealism takes hold over leading poststructuralist thinkers, such as Deleuze and Derrida, requires tracing the development of this idea in Heidegger's thought.

Heidegger adopts a variety of attitudes toward German idealism. Why poststructuralism takes Hegel to be the archetype of all the problematic tendencies of the philosophical tradition has no straightforward answer.³

Nevertheless, for reasons that may well be as much biographical as philosophical, Hegel remains for poststructuralism the denouement of the philosophical tradition, even though Nietzsche, on Heidegger's account, is the definitive end of the line for modern metaphysics. Above all others, Hegel's system is the one that has to be overcome to put philosophy back on track, overcome either by fundamental ontology, *differáncia*, or transcendental empiricism (as will be explored in the final three chapters of this book). My concern in this chapter is to reconstruct the narrative by which Hegel becomes the figure who completes the transfer of God into subject and, with this move, brings metaphysics to completion. Demonstrating this does not require going against the grain of Heidegger's interpretation of Hegel, since it is a pronounced line of argument that runs through a number of his works.

DESCARTES AND THE RISE OF THE KNOWING SUBJECT

In an early section of *Being and Time*, Heidegger outlines the necessity for the "Destruction of the History of Ontology," a dramatic and seemingly drastic demand. Why does it require such a comprehensive overhaul? The philosophical tradition has, since Antiquity, appropriated a fairly narrow range of concepts that it has determined to be the master concepts of philosophical inquiry. Within modern metaphysics, there is a further narrowing of the concepts of legitimate concern: "the *ego cogito* of Descartes, the subject, the 'I,' reason, spirit, person" (BT 22). These concepts have become the animating concerns of modern philosophy. These concepts are not in themselves in need of jettisoning, but their predominance is indicative of a failure of philosophy to examine a far more elemental problem, upon which all these issues and problems are based, and which each of these problems assumes an understanding of, but which remains unexamined. This is the issue of being. As Heidegger puts it in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*: "We must understand being so that we may be given over to a world that is" (BP

11). In order to put philosophy back on the correct course to the most basic problem of philosophy—the inquiry into the question of the meaning of being—philosophy needs to be purged of the flaws of traditional ontology.

In the first instance this requires reconstructing the trajectory of Western metaphysics, demonstrating how it has constrained philosophical inquiry from Antiquity to the modern era. Once this deleterious path has been exposed, an approach to being can be envisaged that is adequate to it. In Heidegger's case, reorienting the core problems of the tradition (knowing, selfhood, reason, and so on) away from their corrupted elements to the more elemental issue, their relation to being, will also allow them to be examined in a manner that does justice to philosophical inquiry. What hope is there of understanding these concepts if the most important issue underlying them is neglected? Heidegger is motivated to put philosophy back on track not simply to reclaim the legitimate path of ontology from which thought has been diverted; rather, his concern is guided by the present need of philosophy.

The destruction of the history of ontology is important for the transformation of contemporary philosophy. Putting philosophy back on the right path requires examining the figures that were decisive for the present state of philosophical inquiry. Unsurprisingly, the figures that are decisive in determining the way contemporary philosophy understands the central problems of philosophy are Descartes, Kant, and Hegel. The approach of these figures to the central problems of philosophy has come to dominate modern philosophy. In *Being and Time* Heidegger describes the fundamental problem of their approach this way: when Dasein “understands either itself or Being, it does so in terms of the ‘world’” (BT 22).

This seems like a peculiar criticism for Heidegger to make; after all, the isolation of the Cartesian and Kantian subject from the world is one of his most trenchant criticisms of the philosophical tradition. Heidegger has, however, a number of technical definitions of “world.” By “world” here, he means “the totality of those beings which can be present-at-hand” (BT 64). This sense of “world” is one that is inflicted with a “baleful prejudice” (BT 25), a prejudice that has come to dominate modern philosophy and is inseparable from the neglect of the question of being. That prejudice is to understand *ens*

(that which is) as a posit of the subject. In early modern philosophy Descartes presents the most powerful articulation of this prejudice. He amplifies the prejudice of medieval ontology in which “the meaning of the *ens* is established in the understanding of it as *ens creatum*,” that is, a created being (BT 24). Presumably, for the medieval thinker, created being meant created by God, not by man. Descartes divides existence into that which is self-constant (God) and things that are produced. Humans are the exception within this spectrum by virtue of their thinking, but they too are things: *res cogitans*.

What comes to define the reality of beings, on this view, is its “remaining constant [*ständigen Verbleib*]” (BT 92). What remains constant is the substantiality of a corporeal thing and is prior to “any other ways in which being is determined.” It has as such a metaphysical priority. Descartes’s error was to ignore the being of substance and of Dasein; indeed, he “renounces [it] in principle” (BT 94). He understands objects exclusively as beings and not at all with regard to their being. For Descartes, being is not accessible “as a being” and accordingly cannot be considered an object of investigation. Because being is not accessible, Heidegger argues, Descartes makes beings the privileged object of philosophical inquiry. Consequently, all being comes to be understood in terms of determinate attributes. By understanding being as “world,” Descartes makes the mistake, in Heidegger’s terminology, of treating the ontic as the ontological. Moreover, Descartes employs a methodology appropriate to such a task, and this further diminishes the prospects of a fundamental ontology.

Descartes’s method had two important features: that the world understood as substance adheres to mathematical regularity and that objects can only be grasped through knowing, *intellectio*: “In criticizing the Cartesian point of departure, we must ask which kind of Being that belongs to Dasein we should fix upon as giving us an appropriate way of access to those beings with whose being as *extensio* Descartes equates the being of the ‘world.’ The only genuine access to them lies in knowing, *intellectio*, in the sense of the kind of knowledge we get in mathematics and physics” (BT 95). This “remaining constant,” which this mathematical-styled knowledge appeals to as the standard of truth, renders beings into a readily accessible form: “Thus the being of the ‘world’ is, as it were, dictated to in terms of a definite

idea of being which lies veiled in the concept of substantiality and in terms of the idea of a knowledge by which *such* beings are cognized" (BT 96). The being of the world is as such prescribed by the criteria of scientific method itself. Objects are cognized to the extent that they are accessible to mathematical knowledge. What is accessible is that which "remains constant." The standard of constancy is conceived exclusively as mathematical regularity. The central presupposition by which the knowing subject is presumed to have access to objects—constant objective presence-at-hand (*ständige Vorhandenheit*)—is unexamined. Objects, in this view, present themselves to subjects only on the basis of the conformity of objects to an order worked out in advance, for example, the characterizations of objects that issue from perception.

The perceptual-based descriptions that Descartes employs to describe the external world (for example, as extended in space) cannot explain the cognition of being. The very idea of the truth of objects as constant presence-at-hand prohibits Descartes from seeing that the properties of objects that are taken to be true can only present themselves to *a* Dasein. That is, what this approach fails to confront is that Dasein has *already and implicitly* an understanding of the being of beings. It is only on the basis of this implicit understanding of being that any specific "property" of an object, for example, extension, can be meaningful to Dasein. That understanding is not knowledge.

Descartes's reliance on the methodology of mathematics involves a pivotal shift from ontological considerations to epistemological ones: "to *know* an object in what is supposedly the most rigorous ontical manner is our only possible access to the primary Being of beings which such knowledge reveals" (BT 100). The irony of the Cartesian strategy is that scientific method is supposed to bring the world back to the very center of thought, by virtue of its ability to express the world as a universal and substantial truth. But what moves to the center is not world, and certainly not being, but rather the subject and its representational way of knowing the world. This subject is characterized by a division between a representing self and a world that it sets out to know. What is brought to center stage is a knowing worldless subject.

In the writings that follow *Being and Time*, Heidegger describes the emergence of representationalism in the history of philosophy and the way in which it becomes tied to a very specific type of subject. As was sketched briefly in the introduction, the decisive shift in modern philosophy was the redefining of *subjectum* from the being of all beings to *subjectum* as ego.⁴ *Subjectum*, Heidegger claims, is derived from *hupokeimenon*: “the core of the thing.”⁵ In ancient and medieval thought substance and *subjectum* both indicated the being of beings. Descartes’s innovation was to redefine *subjectum* as the “self-representing representation.”⁶ Heidegger explains the character of this subject in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*: “this being which we ourselves are is given to the knower first and as the only certain thing, that the subject is accessible immediately and with absolute certainty, that it is better known than all objects” (BP 123). This vision of a subject completely misinterprets Dasein and its relation to being. Descartes’s subject is defined by virtue of its presence to itself. The idea that we could be present to ourselves with transparency or with epistemic certainty fails to capture the being of Dasein.

While Dasein is a being, our selfhood, language, understanding, existence, and indeed anything else of philosophical significance cannot be adequately explained as beings. Much of *Being and Time* shows how Dasein should be depicted. In Descartes’s case, treating the self as a thing (*res*) that it represents to itself with certainty is not the end of the story. This representationalism is how all relations to objects come to be conceived. This subject is a creature that has itself before itself and conceives the being of objects before it as representations. The rise of representationalism is a critical step in detailing the limitations of modern philosophy. Conceiving of objects as representations is not in itself a problem; the problem is conceiving the relation to objects exclusively on this model. When “being is defined as the objectness of representation, and truth as the certainty of representation,” Dasein, world, and objects are obscured (AWP 66).

Heidegger points out three problematic elements of representationalism. Firstly, it assumes a subject that is opposed to an object (*Gegenstand*). Descartes interprets the world solely in terms of a thinking subject (*res cogitans*) set over and against the *res extensa*. The subject is a purely inner

entity, which by virtue of its representations knows and relates to the external world. These representations allow the subject to “return with [its] booty to the cabinet of consciousness after one has gone out and grasped it” (BT 62).⁷ Descartes’s philosophy starts from the subject and returns to the subject (BP 152).

Secondly, as has already been discussed, the marker of the relation of subject to object is knowledge. By setting up beings as objects over and against the subject, they are made available to the subject in an orderable way: “They become objects of explanatory representation” (AWP 65). The purpose of the explanation is to secure everything into an explanatory order. The setting up of beings in this way makes them available as items to be known. Thirdly, the I takes a privileged position: “When, however, man becomes the primary and genuine *subjectum*, this means that he becomes that being upon which every being, in its way of being and its truth, is founded” (AWP 66–67). With Descartes *subjectum* has become the subject. The subject is defined by its knowing relation to itself. And the being of beings is defined and determined by the knowledge the subject has of them. All being has thereby become the subject. The being of *hupokeimenon* has been transformed into the being that is determined by the knowing subject. Reason is employed by this subject to contain the object as something over against the subject, and truth has come to mean only certainty.

In pre-Platonic philosophy “humanity *is* the receiver of beings” (AWP 68). This relationship to the object is nonrepresentational, since the object presents itself to man rather than the object being accessible to man by virtue of norms that issue from the subject. By contrast, in the modern era the unidirectionality of the subject-object relation has shifted—the subject determines the object. Man has become the determiner of being. Knowing, reason, and certainty place the object at the disposal of man and technology. The object is kept securely in its place over and against the subject “which masters and proceeds against” it (AWP 82). The anchor of all this securing and mastering of the object is the self-certain subject. This subject grounds itself through its own self-certainty. That certainty is fundamentally representational: The ego can securely put itself before itself at any time. The object is made present to the subject through the certainty the subject has that *her*

picture of the thing captures the being of the thing. The more the world is related to human beings, the more easily it is put at their disposal (AWP 70).

The representational character of knowing and the ego cogito become thereby the defining attributes of modern philosophy. For Heidegger, Kant has an important place in the development of this modern outlook, though we can only really gesture at Kant's role here. Heidegger's account of Kant is complex. Kant comes to the brink of the problem of fundamental ontology. He has insight into the problem, but could not in the end escape his Cartesian origins. Despite Kant's success in overturning many of the key distinctions in early modern philosophy, Heidegger argues that he continues the Cartesian approach to the subject by presenting the concept of the I as "the selfsameness and steadiness of something that is always present-at-hand. The Being of the I is understood as the reality of the *res cogitans*" (BT 320). Being and beings are still equated since "the I think" is related to its representations in such a way that it would be "nothing without them." The I is not merely an I think "but an I think something." And it is the "something" that is the problem because it presupposes a world over and against it that is already given to the thinking I.⁸ In this case the I think is not in the world but is a thinking I separable from it: "as a consequence the I was again forced back to an isolated subject" (BT 321). This prejudice is further compounded because, just as with Descartes, Kant conceives of the "being of beings" as a being known (BP 127–28).

In *Being and Time* Heidegger writes: "If what the term 'idealism' says amounts to the understanding that Being can never be explained by beings but is already that which is 'transcendental' for every being, then idealism affords the only correct possibility for a philosophical problematic. . . . But if 'idealism' signifies tracing back every being to a subject or consciousness, . . . then this idealism is not less naïve in its method than the most grossly militant realism" (BT 208). Kant's idealism does not completely fall from grace on this spectrum, since he still preserves the transcendental status of the object. In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, Heidegger considers Kant to be struggling with fundamental ontology, that is, Kant is trying to think through how to cognize the being of beings. It is clear that previous conceptions of knowing and metaphysics could not achieve this and that Kant

attempts to create a system adequate to this task, but as we have already seen, he does not ultimately escape the epistemological prejudice and subjectivism of early modern philosophy.

HEIDEGGER'S CRITIQUE OF HEGEL

It is Hegel, however, who brings the tradition of Western metaphysics to its culmination. He traces every being back to a subject; indeed, substance itself will be understood as subject. This transformation of all being into subjectivity requires, Heidegger argues, a critical conceptual innovation that is undertaken by Fichte and Schelling and reaches its purest point in Hegel's thought: the transformation of the subject into self-consciousness. Hegel's dialectic of self-consciousness brings to completion the "subjectivization" of *hupokeimenon* that Descartes inaugurates. For Hegel, "the primary determination of the subject in the sense of *hupokeimenon*, that which lies present there, is suppressed, or else this determination is dialectically sublated in self-consciousness, in self-conceiving. . . . For him the essential nature of substance lies in its being the concept of its own self" (BP 152–53). These sentences contain the two arms of Heidegger's criticism of Hegel.

In the first passage Heidegger describes self-consciousness, which is indicative of the broad program of Hegel's thought, as an amplification of Descartes's subjectivization of philosophy, where world, substance, and objects are made present to the subject through conceptual knowledge. It is not that self-consciousness is absent in the Cartesian frame; his point is that in Hegel's thought the subject's self-conception becomes the very principle of thought, indeed the very principle of the modern age. The second passage shows just how Hegel fulfills the metaphysical potentiality of self-consciousness, that is, how he realizes self-consciousness as the defining principle of the modern age. Rather than all conceptuality being aligned with the subject, which it then imposes on an external object domain, Hegel's absolute strives to bring itself to presence as concept. It is not just that being comes to be discursively mediated; *being itself* is now

subject since it appears to will its own discursive representation. This idea of substance becoming subject forms the basis of Heidegger's claim in later writings, such as "The Age of the World Picture," that Hegel's thought is the fulfillment of metaphysics.⁹ This is tempered a little in his Nietzsche lectures, when he claims that Nietzsche is the official marker of the end of metaphysics. My concern here, however, is to examine why Heidegger takes Hegel's thought to be a metaphysics of presence.¹⁰

The desire for permanent and transparent self-knowledge has its basis in an insecurity that is pervasive in the history of philosophy: to make mind at home in the world.¹¹ This desire to be at home is present in Descartes's focus on the mathematical that endures and in Kant's "I think" that accompanies all of one's representations, which like all of metaphysics, employs the "hammer of conceptual comprehension" to recognize itself in the world.¹² Hegel takes this quest to the limit. Descartes's attempts to secure the relation of mind to world by grounding knowledge of the world in the self-certainty of the subject have the unfortunate consequence of creating a worldless subject, since the self-grounding is achieved by isolating it from the world; Kant's apperceptive ego reproduces the same problem. As we will see in chapter 4, Heidegger's response to this subject-centered world is to reinstate the world that Descartes, Kant, and Husserl isolated from the subject by thoroughly collapsing the separation of subject from world. An explanation of selfhood that assumes a division of self and world is flawed, because *Dasein* is *always already* with the world. As has already been discussed, the worldly character of all beings is thereby restricted to discursive representation. To restrict the world, beings, and selfhood to knowing loses the world, since substance (what is other to the subject) becomes wholly defined in terms of how the object is known by the subject.

Heidegger recognizes that Hegel attempted to correct the isolation and worldlessness of the Cartesian cogito. Heidegger gives Hegel credit for trying to overcome the separation of subject and substance, but in Heidegger's view he does this by turning substance into an expanded notion of the self. Rather than consciousness traveling outside of its "cabinet of consciousness" to engage with the world that it represents, consciousness travels outside of itself only to find itself in that world. The philosophical project of

attempting to be at home in the world is achieved in Hegel's system by conceiving the self-world relation as one of extreme self-identity. Hegel's absolute knowing is self-consciousness's transparent self-understanding. Ultimately, Heidegger argues that this reflective act does not disclose the self in its understanding of being but is simply self-grasping, and this does not express the character of Dasein: "In Hegel's metaphysics, the subjectivity of reason is elaborated to the point of its absoluteness. As the subjectivity of absolute representation it of course acknowledges sensuous certainty and corporeal self-consciousness, *but only to absorb them into the absoluteness of absolute spirit.*"¹³

Hegel makes self-consciousness at home in the world by equating the world with it. The labor of the negative and Hegelian reason all serve the ends of self-consciousness. The protagonist of the *Phenomenology*, the natural consciousness, is restless; it pushes itself forward beyond its limits to find an adequate self-understanding. Where Descartes was content to rest with the certainty of the subject, Hegel's subject appears certain and satisfied only when it comprehends the absolute, an absolute that is self-consciousness writ large.¹⁴

However, in Hegel's thought the absolute is not just something grasped; it too is something that strives to makes itself present as concept. This is the second aspect of Heidegger's critique of Hegel that we referred to previously. Heidegger describes it like this: "This [violent restlessness] is the will of the absolute that wants to be in its absoluteness in and for itself among us."¹⁵ Hegel's fulfillment of the transformation of the *hupokeimenon* into subject is not just a subjective idealism; it is an absolute idealism. Descartes and Kant were content to keep nature over and against their respective accounts of subjectivity (the cogito or the apperceptive subject). Reason was grounded in the subject in Descartes; with Kant reason was self-grounding. Both figures present a one-sided claim to truth, a certainty bound to the claims of reason alone. Hegel's self-knowing subject enhances this "ego-logical" aspect, which runs from Descartes to Fichte.¹⁶ But Hegel adds a further dimension to this narrative: spirit and the absolute itself make themselves present to us, a movement that Heidegger describes as *parousia*. This is the metaphysical and historical destiny of spirit.

The destiny of spirit discloses itself through an interplay of inadequate human knowing striving to understand itself and the absolute making itself present to us through the unfolding of its self-comprehension. Heidegger describes it this way: “the self-gathering of the absolute into its *parousia* demands to be presented.”¹⁷ The absolute itself strives to make itself known. The mind-world relation is not a dualism that is overcome by the subject determining substance in its own light; rather, substance is also subject. In this context, Heidegger quotes, in various writings on this issue, the well-known sentence from the preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*: “everything hangs on apprehending and expressing the truth not merely as substance but also equally as subject” (PhS §17/GW9 14).¹⁸ Rather than the being of beings residing in simply how they are represented by the subject, in Hegel’s case the spirit domain itself strives to make itself present to us as concept. This is achieved in a very peculiar way: spirit makes itself present through a process of self-mediation by which the experience of self-consciousness brings spirit to the point where it is adequate to itself. This does not change the approach to being in modern metaphysics, which is after all a subjectivization of being. Nevertheless, the transformation of substance into subject heralds the end of metaphysics. By conceiving substance as a subject, and as a subject modeled on self-consciousness, Hegel is essentially arguing that *being only is* insofar as it can be comprehended. Being therefore is reduced to nothing more than its own capacity to grasp itself. And it can only grasp itself as “constant presence.”

As was previously discussed, the modern representational view of truth conceives the being of objects only insofar as they are present to the subject as pictures before the representing mind. This model assumes the agreement of the representation and the object; moreover, it asserts this agreement to be cognition and truth. This sets up in advance a model for the understanding of being that “is oriented to being as presence and constancy.”¹⁹ In Hegel’s thought we see that the object domain itself is presented as something that strives to make itself represented. There is therefore no remainder, no alternative way in which being could be conceived, which at the very least might haunt the philosophical imaginary since now all being is a potential object of representation, and moreover the object is subject.²⁰ This

view of being as knowable presence to the subject and of a subject who as self-consciousness has transparent self-knowledge is, as we will see in subsequent chapters, how poststructuralist thinkers consider Hegel. I will now, however, turn my attention to showing how Fichte's and Hegel's thought can be seen as providing a far more complex view of subjectivity than the term "metaphysics of subjectivity" will allow. This will in turn enable a reengagement of poststructuralism and German idealism.

2

FICHTE'S STRIVING SUBJECT

THE NAME FOR Fichte's philosophical project is the *Wissenschaftslehre* (Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge). His corpus does not include a single work with the title of *Wissenschaftslehre*; rather, it is the name for a broad project of which there are at least fifteen versions, and between which there is substantial terminological and methodological variation.¹ The terminological inconsistency and substantive variations between the numerous versions of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, not to mention the complexity of his writing style, make Fichte a very difficult thinker to pin down. Perhaps all one can say uncontroversially is that he tried to transform Kant's critical philosophy in the wake of the most influential critiques of the critical philosophy at the end of the eighteenth century, most notably, G. E. Schulze's anonymously published *Aenesidemus* and Maimon's skeptical critique of Kant.² But this is where consensus ends.

Fichte's thought has often been represented as the archetype of the philosophy of the subject, in which all that is external to the subject has no independent status other than the way it is determined by the subject.³ There are many reasons for Fichte to be considered in this way, not least his own obscure remarks concerning all that is not the I being simply a posit of the I, his notion of the absolute I, and his various disparaging remarks about those philosophers who are not "disposed" to idealism being "naturally slack"

and “twisted by spiritual servitude” (IWL 20/SW_I 434).⁴ The central idea in his thinking—the self-positing subject—was widely interpreted in its early English-language reception as advocating the reduction of the material world to the mental world. In recent years, Fichte’s reputation has been transformed from that of an exponent of a crude subjective metaphysics into that of a thinker whose project is central to the development of post-Kantian idealism and whose concerns have a distinctively contemporary resonance.

Fichte develops the idea of the self-positing subject against what has come to be understood as some of the defining debates in the development of post-Kantian idealism (Reinhold’s development of the critical philosophy and Schulze’s skeptical challenge to it).⁵ The primary concern of this chapter is not, however, to present the detail of Fichte’s response to these important interventions, but to show how his response to Schulze and Reinhold, among other things, framed his distinctive extension of Kant’s thought. Fichte develops the notion of self-positing in response to the major philosophical issue of the day: how to complete the critical philosophy. The demand for its completion had its genesis in the perceived inadequacy of Kant’s providing of a unified structure for cognition. Rationalism and empiricism opposed each other by asserting either sensibility or intelligence as the valid cognitive faculty. One looked to experience to validate knowledge and the other to reason alone. Kant tried to unify these two views by preserving the distinction between intuition and conceptual knowledge not as separate spheres of knowledge, but rather as separate sources of a *unified* knowledge.⁶ Intuitions and concepts *together* allow the cognition and experience of objects.

Fichte, however, was convinced by Maimon’s criticism of Kant: that Kant had failed to unify these two worlds. Kant’s reliance on the passively delivered intuitive content of knowledge required that knowledge be tied to an external and unknowable thing-in-itself. For Fichte, the way around this problem, which would thus complete Kant’s project, was to present the active self as the first principle upon which all our representing activities could be grounded. In order to make the active subject the first principle of philosophy, he had to show that the unity of subject and object was internal to consciousness, while still preserving the idea that the I is affected by an independent reality

against which its judgments could be constrained; without the positing of an independent reality, no objective claims could be made.⁷ Any first principle that might secure the completion of the critical project had to establish that knowledge was not given its content by a passively conceived faculty of sensibility, but that the subject was *active* in the determination of the intuitive component of knowledge. The possibility of knowledge is grounded in an active subject whose determinations could not be explained by appeal to a given. The traditional picture of Fichte's attempt to correct the concept/intuition dualism is that this active subject is a bit too active, taking subjectivism to new heights by presenting the I as the determiner of all meaning.⁸

The self-positing I, the principle with which the Kantian dualism is to be corrected, presents self-consciousness as self-determined in a way that does not simply position the subject as the arbiter of all meaning; its determination of itself is conditional upon it being *constrained*. The check (*Anstoss*) provides a "realist" constraint on this ideal activity. What appears to follow from this is the reintroduction of a real/ideal dualism. Some commentators have argued that Fichte's strategy for correcting this dualism through an external constraint reintroduces a modified version of the thing-in-itself.⁹ Other approaches understand the self-determination at the core of Fichte's project to be a means of ensuring that there is no domain outside of the "space of reasons."¹⁰ These approaches capture two strains in Fichte's account of the I—an idealist and a realist strain. The I appears to be divided between its rationality and its sensuality. One can see the tension between these strains running throughout the *Wissenschaftslehre* manifested into a host of divisions: I/not-I, finite/infinite, and so on. While these divisions are never reconciled, the I does not exist as a fundamentally divided entity. In Fichte's discussion of theoretical knowledge, in the second part of the *Wissenschaftslehre* of 1794 (known in English translation as *The Science of Knowledge*), the productive imagination constantly bridges these divisions. In the third section (which focuses on practical knowledge) these divisions are united by the figure of the striving self.

Fichte's attempt to reconcile the dualism of concept and intuition requires overcoming the idea of a thing-in-itself. At the same time, he holds on to the idea of an external constraint on the I's self-positing, and this

in turn excludes the idea that Fichte's project advocates the exclusivity of the space of reasons. The striving subject confronts the opposition between these two approaches. The striving subject can be understood as reason's drive for self-determination. The striving is a process of self-transformation, as consciousness constantly confronts the limitations of its own inadequate explanations of its knowing, limits it strives to overcome. The constraint provided by the check makes this self-determination possible, but it also makes the redetermination of its knowing infinite because the check is not fixed. However, before examining Fichte's notions of the check and the striving subject, I will first set out the philosophical problems to which these notions respond. This will require a brief examination of some of the defining debates in the development of post-Kantian idealism: Fichte's critique of dogmatism; his debate with Schulze and Reinhold; and his critique of the reflective model of consciousness.

CRITIQUE OF DOGMATISM

For Fichte there are only two systematic ways of doing philosophy—idealism and dogmatism. Dogmatism is a very broad rubric for Fichte, under which much of the philosophical tradition lies; it includes Spinozism, naturalism, and realism. In summary, he takes dogmatic philosophy as offering causal explanations: "Dogmatism is supposed to explain representation, and it tries to make a particular representation comprehensible on the basis of an efficacious action of a thing-in-itself" (IWL 20/SWI 435). As Fichte sees it, causal explanations, for example, of consciousness and the intellect, present them as caused by something other. The intellect "is supposed to be the second member in a series" (IWL 21/SWI 436). Understanding a representation as a straightforward causal relation of object to cognitive capacity reduces knowing and experience to a deterministic relation that negates human freedom. Ultimately, causal explanations are not compatible with human freedom since the consistent dogmatist would have to reject the independence of the I, characterizing it as just another *thing*.

The I's self-relation cannot be understood by such an explanation. The causal chain is always a series that, for Fichte, fails to explain the self-referential quality of the I. The representing activities of consciousness and its awareness of those representing activities are unable to be explained by causality.¹¹ For Fichte, dogmatism cannot capture the ground of experience, the I cannot be explained causally. This is a complex issue that will be discussed in more detail below. At this stage all we need note is that the distinguishing activity of self-consciousness cannot be something empirically given or sensibly caused. It is through the notions of self-positing and his rehabilitation of intellectual intuition that Fichte reformulates consciousness's relation to itself such that it breaks out of this causal chain. His formulation of the self-positing I appears to be established in reaction to the dogmatist's determinism. It is as if Fichte is unable to find a place for human freedom within the dogmatist's framework and so then sets about consolidating his assumption of the freedom of consciousness and its ability to constitute itself. Once we have this free self-constituting subject, it is a short leap to idealism. The self-positing I, upon which the whole of his system is built, then simply appears to confirm the traditional picture of Fichte as something of a crude idealist who, in opposition to this causal account of knowledge and consciousness, presents the truth of objects as purely a matter of the subject's positing, that is, he simply assumes the freedom of the subject and gives it an overblown power of determination. This traditional picture of Fichte squares neither with his texts nor with most of the scholarship. Though it must be said that Fichte is not always very helpful in defending himself.

It is above all the character of consciousness that Fichte opposes to dogmatism. A thing cannot represent itself, and a thing cannot be what it is "for itself"; it can only be presented as what it is in relation to someone who is capable of representing it, someone who can, for example, conceive its identity *as* existent, "an intellect for which the thing in question exists" (IWL 21/SW1 436).¹² This does not mean that the subject simply determines the reality of the external object, but rather that the object can only be *claimed* to have an existence by a self-conscious subject.¹³ This subject, rather than being a determinant in a single series, is itself a "double series"

(IWL 2I/SWI 436). Its existence is inseparable from its self-observation. An independent object cannot be the *cause* either of self-awareness or of the representation of objects.¹⁴ In the case of consciousness, the self-positing I is an *act* of self-intuition (intellectual intuition). This intuition, as we will see below, is not a sensible intuition of an internal self. Conceiving the self this way would make the self the product of a causal chain—the very thing Fichte is trying to avoid.

What distinguishes us as subjects from things is that we can take ourselves as objects, though we do this in a unique way that is different from the way we experience ordinary things. Dogmatism, as Fichte understands it, is incapable of explaining this doubled or self-reflective character of consciousness. While Fichte's dissatisfaction with the dogmatist's explanation of consciousness forges his project's focus on the freedom of the I, he does not want to throw away all vestiges of naturalism because the freedom of the subject must be limited. The knowledge claims of the subject, and more generally of reason, must be constrained, otherwise the traditional picture of his idealism invoked at the outset would, as Fichte is well aware, be valid. More importantly, without an external constraint on the subject there would be no I. It is through the idea of the check that he attempts to provide the self-positing I with the requisite limitation of its spontaneity, which both prevents the grounding of his thought in this self-positing I being conceived as a crude idealism and establishes the unique striving character of that I. Before we can examine the self-positing subject and the constraint that allows it to claim an objective status for its representations, I want to briefly sketch the two other generally acknowledged influences on the development of Fichte's self-positing subject: the model of reflective consciousness and his "Review of *Aenesidemus*."

"REVIEW OF AENESIDEMUS"

Fichte's "Review of *Aenesidemus*" marks a key transition in the history of the development of post-Kantian philosophy. *Aenesidemus* is the title of an

anonymously published book, now known to be the work of G. E. Schulze, that raised a number of important criticisms against the critical philosophy. The most damaging criticisms were directed at Karl Reinhold, the leading figure in the Kantian vanguard in Germany. These criticisms were widely held to pose a significant challenge to the critical philosophy. Fichte emerged almost overnight as one of the leading Kantians, and his admiration for Reinhold's "elementary philosophy" required him to respond to Schulze's criticisms. In the course of writing his review of *Aenesidemus*, so the story goes, Fichte's relationship to the critical philosophy underwent a profound transformation. In a letter, Fichte says: "[*Aenesidemus*] has overthrown Reinhold, made me suspicious of Kant and has overturned my whole system from the ground up" (EPW 371). This suspicion did not involve the rejection of Kant's critical philosophy, but rather necessitated its transformation or radicalization. Fichte argues that his reconstructed system, the *Wissenschaftslehre*, "is in complete agreement with the Kantian philosophy and is nothing other than the Kantian philosophy properly understood" (IWL 52/SWI 469). The advancement of the critical philosophy required it confront Schulze's criticism, and if done successfully, that is, systematically, the spirit of the critical philosophy would be regrounded and reinvigorated.¹⁵

The principle of consciousness occupies the foundational place in Reinhold's system. In his view, the history of modern philosophy is fundamentally concerned with the "origin of representation." Reinhold argues that the critical philosophy continues this project and that Kant's great innovation was to correct the one-sided attempts to do this in empiricism and rationalism by grounding the "formal conditions of experience" in an "a priori faculty of cognition." However, Kant did not "show how the faculty of cognition is *originally* constituted."¹⁶ Kant failed to systematize his insight, that the previously separated faculties of intuition and intellect had to be unified. The systematization of this unified knowledge required not just a science of the faculty of cognition but of the faculty of representation more generally, since the essential character of consciousness is representational, and this in turn could only be grounded in "a fact of consciousness." This fact is apparent, Reinhold argued, because consciousness makes the distinction between its representation, its own subjectivity, and the object to which the

representation is related.¹⁷ The basic attribute of consciousness is its representing activity. On Reinhold's view, this representational consciousness is self-explanatory. This was described by Reinhold as the "fact of consciousness." It is something that is simply found by self-reflection, since all representations must refer back to an I. This is why he considers this representing consciousness to be a fact and so a first principle.

Schulze argued that the principle of consciousness, as Reinhold conceived it, was far from self-evident and could not establish a first principle. His main contention concerns the principle of consciousness (built on the self-evidence of the distinguishing and relating of consciousness, object, and representation). Distinguishing subject and object *presupposes* an awareness of the distinction between subject and object. For Schulze, the consciousness of any representation presupposes a *preexisting* awareness of the distinction between object and subject, without which one could not distinguish the representation from the subject and the object. In short, there is a circularity to Reinhold's foundational claim for a representing consciousness. A preexisting consciousness of oneself as a subject allows discriminations between subject, object, and representation, but this self-awareness then appears outside the terms established by Reinhold, since this self-awareness could not then be understood to be a representation. In other words, for Schulze this self-awareness must then be of an order other than that established by Reinhold.¹⁸

Reinhold posited representational consciousness as the first principle of his elemental philosophy. In consciousness, "representation is distinguished through the subject from both object and subject and [the representation] is referred to both."¹⁹ Schulze argued that consciousness could only be a first principle if consciousness's distinguishing activity were derived from a *pre-representational* awareness of an external object that could, in the first instance, be distinguished from the representation. Schulze tried to break out of the circularity of the representational paradigm of the principle of consciousness by reinstalling the thing-in-itself as a standard by which representations could be shown to be determined.²⁰ This, Fichte argues, amounted to an agreement with Reinhold's position in the sense that truth had to be a fact. Rather than being a fact of consciousness (as with

Reinhold), Schulze's fact took the traditional route of an external object (*Tatsache*). Fichte saw the merit in Schulze's criticisms, remarking that they are "appropriate objections to the principle of consciousness considered as first principle of all philosophy and as a mere fact, and they make it necessary to establish a new foundation for this principle" (EPW 65/SWI 10). Nevertheless, he disagreed with Schulze's attempt to solve the problem, which was by appeal to a given way in which the world was. Unsurprisingly, for Fichte the passage "from the external [the object] to the internal [the subject] or vice versa is precisely what is in question. It is precisely the task of the critical philosophy to show that no such passage is required, that everything which occurs within our mind can be completely explained within and comprehended on the basis of the mind itself" (EPW 69/SWI 15).²¹

The realization of the validity of Schulze's criticisms of the critical philosophy is a pivotal moment in Fichte's intellectual development. He responds by attempting to establish the critical philosophy on a new secure footing. Fichte's "Review of *Aenesidemus*" is a very compressed announcement of the path he thinks philosophy should take. He argues that Reinhold's "first principle of all philosophy" was incorrect in seeking a "fact" and that it should "also express an Act [*Tathandlung*]" (EPW 64/SWI 8).²² Unpacking the insight contained in this peculiar and technical term, which was intended to achieve what all others had failed, took the rest of his academic career. Fichte was never satisfied with his explanation, which is why there are so many versions of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Nevertheless, the crux of this insight is that human subjectivity could not, as it was with Descartes and much of the philosophy of mind that has followed him, be seen as purely cognitive capacities or abstract capacities to follow rules. To view the subject as entirely contained by its faculties and cognition leaves out just how such a subject comes into existence. Paradoxically, there is therefore something of a Cartesian quest in Fichte—to explain how human life has developed into the distinctive being it is. But his quest does not lead to a prefabricated complete foundation such as the cogito. Fichte's subject is active and self-generating. It is this peculiarly human act of self-positing that marks the distinctiveness of human subjectivity, a notion that he thinks ought to end the equation of human subjectivity with cognitive capacities.

SELF-POSITING, ACTING, AND INTELLECTUAL INTUITION

Fichte essentially agreed with Reinhold that “the question philosophy has to answer is the connection between our representations and their objects” (EPW 317/SW₂ 435). But as we have already seen, the weakness of Reinhold’s position concerned the status of representation as the foundational principle. A fact of consciousness is not the path to ascertaining the connection of subject, object, and representation. For Fichte, what had to be questioned at the outset was the very nature of the subject/object relation itself. Reinhold’s self-evident fact of consciousness, which tried to explain the cognitive faculties of consciousness by appeal to a subject/object relation, is misguided, as are all attempts to explain consciousness that presuppose it as constituted by a subject/object relation (including Kant’s).²³ Fichte’s dissatisfaction with this approach is instrumental in his reformulation of intellectual intuition, a concept he uses to explain the I’s self-relation in a way that avoids the problem of representation.²⁴

The traditional account of self-consciousness presents the relation of the self to itself as a reflective model of self-awareness. This self-awareness distinguishes the I that reflects from the I that is reflected upon. But, Fichte says, “in order for you to be able to do this, however, the thinking subject within this act of thinking must in turn be the object of a higher thinking, otherwise it could not be an object of consciousness.” Such a description of self-consciousness will always require “for every consciousness, one that takes the former as its object and so on forever. . . . We could never arrive at original consciousness this way” (IWL III-12/SW_I 526). The problem is employing a subject/object model to explain self-consciousness. In order to avoid the circularity of the problem, consciousness’s presence to itself must be considered in such a way that the subjective and objective are “one and the same.” The way around the problem of circularity is to present the *activity* of the I’s self-reflection as inseparable from the I. There is no I as object prior to the act of thinking itself. The I is unconditioned.

Reinhold thought that the residual weaknesses in Kant's thought could only be corrected with a first principle that could unite the faculties. Even in the wake of Fichte's agreement with Aenesidemus about the viability of this first principle, Fichte did not abandon the idea of a first principle altogether; he retains Reinhold's essentially Cartesian quest for a first principle, though he does abandon the language of faculties. He encapsulates that first principle in perhaps the most well-known phrase from the version of the *Wissenschaftslehre* from 1794 (often referred to as the *Grundlage*): "The I originally and absolutely [*schlechthin*] posits its own existence [*Sein*]" (SK 99/SW1 98). This is the claim upon which Fichte's philosophical system is constructed. While the *Grundlage* seeks to establish a certain first principle,²⁵ the emphasis of the first principle is on the transcendental character of the self-positing I rather than certain knowledge.²⁶

Fichte describes this Act [*Tathandlung*] in this way: "The I's own positing of itself is thus its own pure activity. The I posits itself, and by virtue of this self-assertion it exists; and conversely, the I exists and posits its own existence by virtue of merely existing. It is at once the agent and the product of action; the active, and what the activity brings about are one and same, and hence 'I am' expresses an Act [*Tathandlung*], and the only one possible."²⁷ On the face of it, this description appears to give the I Godlike powers of self-creation, but this is not what is at issue here. Conceiving the I as an Act (*Tathandlung*) is intended to express a unique form of self-relation, which moves beyond Reinhold's inadequate formulation of the fact of consciousness. Fichte's attempt to establish the distinctiveness of this first principle of self-positing should also be seen against the background of his dissatisfaction with the concept/intuition antithesis and the reflective model of self-consciousness (its defining quality being its awareness of itself as an object in the same way that it is aware of any other object). The self-positing I responds to these problems by stressing the spontaneity and creativity of the I. The critical move involves establishing a pre-representational "ground" for our representing activities. The I's positing of itself is markedly distinct from the dogmatist's account since there is no *external* cause of the I; rather, the existence of the I is inseparable from its positing of itself. There is no thing that can be called the I that is prior to its act of self-positing.

In the original discussion of this issue in the theoretical part of the *Wissenschaftslehre* from 1794, the self-positing of the I is established through a very elaborate method of abstraction. For there to be an I, the structure of that I must be understood as self-positing because of the implausibility of some external cause initiating the I. Yet the positing of its freedom also entails the positing of constraints on that freedom, without which it could not be determinate. A few years later, Fichte's general dissatisfaction with the artificiality of this deductive strategy for establishing the transcendental ego saw him take a more phenomenological approach to the presentation of the I's positing of itself. In that context he presents an examination of a distinctive *act* of the I thinking itself, which he argues makes consciousness possible. The term he used for this distinctively human attribute was "intellectual intuition," which will be discussed shortly.²⁸

The problem of how to unite the dichotomy of concept and intuition plagued post-Kantian critical philosophy and was central to Fichte's formulation of the self-positing I. Intuition enables the reception of sensory information, whereas the understanding (*Verstand*) gives that "sensory manifold" the conceptuality that makes it meaningful. While these sources of knowledge operate in conjunction to allow cognition, the problem for post-Kantian philosophy was that this two-moded approach to knowledge did not demonstrate in any transparent manner the way in which the sensible and the intelligible worlds were actually unified. Kant's division between the sensible world and the intelligible world had to be connected. Fichte intimated that his development of the self-positing I, which could unite these two "worlds," builds on Kant's "pure apperception," which had the potential to unite sensibility and conceptuality, but Fichte argued that Kant had not made the most of this.²⁹ For Fichte, the I's active experience of itself is able to unite (at least temporarily) these separate spheres. The self-positing I has neither an essentializable quality (a fact) nor is it caused by an external object, since this would make the I the kind of causal "thing" or fact that he must avoid to transform the critical philosophy.

For Fichte, the first principle of philosophy had to be a *Tathandlung* (fact-act), where fact (the sensible) and act (spontaneity) are united. He revived the notion of intellectual intuition to capture the I's essential self-relation,

a term he took to embody such a unity.³⁰ In intellectual intuition, no thing is intuited, only “sheer activity—not an activity that has been brought to a halt, but one that continues; not a being, but something living” (IWL 48/SWI 465). Intellectual intuition tries to capture the primacy of the I’s acting and its pre-representational and immediate self-relation. Only by virtue of intellectual intuition do “I know that *I* do this.” It is the very condition of agency and acting that I know that I act and that I determine myself to act. This acting I, whose existence is its acting, operates as a quasi-foundational and transcendental I.³¹ It is the condition for representing and experience, and it has a primordial status in Fichte’s system. Leaving aside the issue as to whether or not this I is foundational, Fichte characterizes the I in terms that do not reify its subjecthood. In all the versions of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, the I is described by a host of fluid notions: *Tathandlung*, *schweben* (hover, oscillate), and above all *streben* (striving), which he says is “what is highest and primary in human beings.”³²

Intuition, as Kant had conceived it, had to be “directed at some being.” Kant specifically excluded the possibility of intellectual intuition for finite beings, since it would “have to be directed at a non-sensible being . . . it would be an immediate consciousness of the thing-in-itself, and indeed a consciousness made possible by thought alone” (IWL 55/SWI 471). Fichte completely agrees that there cannot be any sort of immediate connection with things-in-themselves. The idea of any such connection would be “a perversion of reason” (IWL 56/SWI 472). Nevertheless, the version of the *Wissenschaftslehre* from 1797 rehabilitates the notion of intellectual intuition, claiming that “everything that occurs within consciousness can be explained on the basis of intellectual intuition” (IWL 50/SWI 466). His revised version of intellectual intuition, which elaborates the notion of the self-positing I, is “not directed toward any sort of being whatsoever; instead it is directed at an acting” (IWL 55/SWI 471). In intellectual intuition, the I has as its object its own acting. What distinguishes this relation from other objects of experience is the immediacy of the self-relation.³³ This immediate self-relation is the condition that allows the I to know that it is itself that is doing some particular thing. In the I, there is no separation of subject and object. Rather, consciousness is the subject/object; it simultaneously posits itself and does

the positing.³⁴ There is neither a thing prior to the act of positing that it might transform into consciousness, nor is there a potential I “waiting” to posit itself into existence.³⁵ Intellectual intuition describes the I’s spontaneity, and that spontaneity is its existence.³⁶

Fichte’s I is not a wholly abstract transcendental subject that reflects upon itself in a manner that could be divorced from the act of reflecting itself. There is no self separable from its acting; rather, the I is *in* its determining and *in* the exercise of reason. In the introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre* from 1797, the notion of intellectual intuition tries to capture the moment of self-legislation that expresses the I’s essential self-determining quality: “Here I am given to myself, by myself, as something that is obliged to be active in a certain way. Accordingly, I am given to myself, by myself, ‘as active in an overall sense.’ . . . It is only through the medium of the ethical law that I catch a glimpse of *myself*” (IWL 49/SWI 466). There is no subject outside of that exercising and authorizing. Intellectual intuition tries to evoke the self-authorizing and self-legislating that characterize the spontaneity of the subject. Intellectual intuition describes an I that is active and in motion. With such a description of the I, Fichte avoids the language of mental faculties; he was at pains to distance this active I from any reification of it as a thing.³⁷ The self-positing I is “unminded,” in the sense that consciousness considered as intellectual intuition is not a self-perception, since there is no empirical thing to be perceived that could function as the source of the idea of the I. There is no thinking-thing to be reflected upon; rather, the I is its determinate self-activity.³⁸ But the active thinking that embodies the I’s essential freedom, if it is to be understood as self-determining, requires a limitation, and it is to that limitation that I now turn.

THE CHECK AS A REALIST CONSTRAINT

The self-positing I does not have infinite powers of self-creation and determination. Its self-assertion is not self-sufficient; the I’s self-positing depends upon another principle—counterpositing.³⁹ The I’s positing requires the

positing of a domain against which the I can assert itself. A finite entity (the I) has to be able to be conceived in opposition to something. This limiting domain is described very simply as the "not-I": "everything which is thought to exist outside of the I, everything which is distinguished from the I and opposed to it" (EPW 147/SW6 295). The determinacy of the I presupposes its limitation: "Just as certainly as I posit myself at all, I posit myself as limited, and this occurs as a consequence of my own intuition of my own act of self-positing. I am finite in virtue of this intuition" (IWL 74/SWI 489). In another work he remarks: "in order to think clearly about the I, I require something to be not-I" (FTP 124). The posited not-I is an "original" transcendental "limitation."

For the I to assert itself, it requires something to assert against, something that limits it. A requires not-A. The counterpositing of the not-I is a primordial instance of pure opposition. It is important to note that the not-I is not an external realm of objects that impinges on the I and so defines the I negatively from without; rather, the not-I is posited by the I. This opposition appears to place a contradiction at the heart of Fichte's first principle of the self-positing I.⁴⁰ The limitation (the not-I) that the subject requires to "posit itself as determined" is posited *by the I*. The I posits a domain (not-I) in order to determine itself. This way of conceiving things would appear to make the not-I identical with the I and thereby annul its status as something that could determine the I. To avert this contradiction, Fichte has to establish that the constraint on the I's positing has the status of something that can be conceived to be independent of the I's positing.

The examination of the I in the theoretical part of the *Wissenschaftslehre* from 1794 was not really able to do more than assume the reality of the not-I as a necessary constraint on the I.⁴¹ In that context, the not-I was unable to be considered as an independent reality, but merely as a theoretical posit of the I. The not-I is asserted because there must be something other to the I that determines the I, without which it would not be subjective, that is, finite and determined. But Fichte's discussion of the necessary constraint on the I is guarded; it cannot characterize that which constrains the I's positing in such a way that it is an externally objective thing, since that would draw him back into the concept/intuition dualism he is trying to avoid:

"The objective to be excluded has no need at all to be present: all that is required if I may so put it—is a check on the I. . . . It would not set bounds to the activity of the I; but would give it the task of setting bounds to itself" (SK 189/SW_I 210–11).

The task of setting "bounds to the activity of the I" is the condition for both the not-I and the self-limitation of the I. The check does not initially presuppose a world apart from the I or even a determination present within the I, but merely "the requirement for a determination to be undertaken within the I" (SK 190–91/SW_I 211). The check places constraints on the I's pure striving activity. (Unhindered striving operates as if its positing could be all reality.) The check provides the condition by which the I can determine itself. The I is constrained by the check, which it must confront and determine itself in relation to. The check has no existence other than as a barrier to the "outward striving activity of the I." The self-limitation emerges because the subject is thrown back on itself because of the thwarting activity of the check. The constraint is an "original limitation"; it is the condition of finitude and hence of "rational beings."

The idea that thought must be fundamentally constrained is not new; it is the bedrock of all realist and dogmatic conceptions of the thing-in-itself, which argue only an external object could be the basis for genuine knowledge. Even in Kant, the given sensuous content of intuition constrains thought.⁴² But in Fichte's case, the thing-in-itself does not simply remain an absolute barrier to the subject's discursive activity; rather, the limitation of the check is inseparable from the I. Indeed, there is no I without this experience of its own fundamentally constrained character. The interplay between the positing and the check allows the I to determine itself. The unchecked striving or activity of the I could not be determinate; indeed, the I would not be at all were it not forced to limit itself, which it does in its confrontation with the check. The I can only determine itself in relation to the check, as Fichte puts it in one of his rare succinct uses of language: "no check, no self-determination" (SK 191/SW_I 212).

But why is the check different from the not-I? What allows the interplay between the two? If the status of the check is different from that of the not-I, which is simply a posit of the I, what is the point of contact? For

the check to be more than a requirement that satisfies the theoretical component of the *Wissenschaftslehre*, which could only infer the necessity of the check, it must actually make itself present to consciousness *as* something rather than the mere "requirement for determination" (SK 190/SWI 211). Fichte describes the check in the most minimal of terms:⁴³ as an "opponent" that sets "the self in motion," a mover that has "no other attribute than being a mover, an opposing force." Nevertheless, what distinguishes it from a mere posit of the I is that it is "*felt* to be such" (SK 246/SWI 279, my emphasis). Because the check is felt, it takes on the role of something genuinely *independent* of the I's spontaneity.⁴⁴ But the check qua feeling cannot be external in the sense of being an independent reality, otherwise the feeling of the check would function in just the same way as the dogmatist's causal thing: a *thing* that produces the finitude of the I. Feeling cannot be considered as being caused by a receptive sensory relation. Were this the case, feeling would be akin to Kantian sensation and hence imbue experience with a type of receptivity that is dependent on a sensed object;⁴⁵ accordingly, this original feeling is described as a self-feeling. If it were described otherwise, the limitation would take on the role of a vulgar thing-in-itself.

Why does Fichte focus on the role of feeling in determining the I? The self-positing I is spontaneous and strives infinitely, but it is checked.⁴⁶ Indeed, the checking is the very condition of it being able to assert itself; it must find itself striving against something that it does not itself posit, otherwise "the I would not be anything distinguishable" (SK 233/SWI 265). But here we seem to come across a paradox: the check has to be both subjective and objective. It is subjective, since it is not an independent reality, but it is also objective in that it is not produced through the activity of the I.⁴⁷ The check is the *feeling* of being constrained, of being directed by something that is not of the I's positing, and yet it is a cue for the determination of the I that cannot be understood as an external cause.⁴⁸ The feeling involved here is non-representational, or more specifically it is pre-representational; it is an immediate state of the subject, an immediate self-affecting that is the condition for the possibility of representing objects.⁴⁹ This self-affecting provides the condition for positing a world external to the I, a reality,

because, as Breazeale puts it, the presence of these feelings in the I represent "a kind of determinacy for which the I is simply unable to hold itself responsible."⁵⁰ It assures itself that there is a world that is not simply all of its own positing, which would be no world at all.

But how is the I to explain its feeling?

There can be nothing limited unless there is also something that limits it. It creates for itself, by means of intuition, a realm of extended matter; and then, by means of thinking, it transfers its merely subjective feelings to this material realm, which it then considers to be the ground of those same feelings. It is only by means of this synthesis that the empirical I is able to construct an object for itself. The empirical I obtains its universe by continuing to analyze and to *explain* its own state. (IWL 75/SWI 49I, my emphasis)⁵¹

The check allows for the explanation of the "transition" from the not-I to the I, since the check forces the I to posit a domain (not-I) from which this check must originate. The I's intuition of its finitude is inseparable from its immediate feeling of being constrained. This feeling of constraint leads it to posit a reality that must be other to it, which could thereby explain the origin of this feeling. The check (and the feeling that is commensurate with it) is more than a posit of the I;⁵² it is "realistic" because the "consciousness of finite creatures is utterly inexplicable, save on the presumption of a force existing *independently* of them, and wholly opposed to them" (SK 246/SWI 280). Nevertheless, the only way in which the feeling can be explained is by means of thinking; there is no point outside of thought that one could adopt that gives us access to this domain: "nothing is real for the I which is not also ideal" (SK 247/SWI 280).

That the activity of the I is restricted by the check gives a realist impetus to the *Wissenschaftslehre*, which, while not advocating a new thing-in-itself, does assume that the check is genuinely independent of the I's positing. But if the object has the status of being genuinely independent of the I, how is it not thereby simply the thing-in-itself in a new guise? Fichte's position is that feeling cannot be *understood* as purely receptive.

In the introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre* from 1797, in which Fichte responds to what he took to be the misunderstandings of the earlier version, he argues that, as a description of determinate limitation, feeling is preferable to sensation, since feeling is not burdened with its association with the thing-in-itself and passivity. Feeling is immediately perceived, unlike sensation, which is related to an object by an "act of thinking" (IWL 75/SWI 490). This immediacy means that feeling is not receptive in the way that Kantian sensation had been taken to be, that is, as an impression created by an external thing-in-itself, which is then transformed into a cognitive state by an act of thinking. This is consistent with Fichte's general agreement with Maimon that Kant's reliance on passively delivered sensory material sets up a dichotomy between the given content of intuition and our discursive capacities, about which more will be said in the next chapter. Nevertheless, it is unclear at this stage, despite Fichte's best intentions of collapsing this dualism, if his division between the check and positing does not in fact simply reinstate the concept/intuition antithesis with all its attendant problems. Hegel raised exactly such a charge against Fichte, arguing that the real/ideal division remains intact by virtue of the independence and evasiveness of the check.⁵³

In Fichte's case, the feeling that determines the I to act, through its constraint, does not reinstate the thing-in-itself because, as we shall see in more detail below, it does not represent a *fixed* barrier to knowledge. He deliberately maintains a tension between the idealistic and the realistic elements of the I, though these elements do not operate dualistically. The I's striving activity constantly redefines the border between its positing and the check. It is with the character of striving subjectivity that this tension is confronted; indeed, Fichte formulates this as the essential paradox constituting human consciousness itself:

This fact, that the necessarily finite spirit must necessarily posit something absolute outside itself (a thing-in-itself), and yet must recognize, from the other side, that the latter exists only for it, is that circle which it is able to extend into infinity, but can never escape. A system that pays no attention at all to this circle, is a dogmatic idealism; for it is indeed the aforesaid circle which alone confines us and makes us finite beings. (SK 247/SWI 281)⁵⁴

The I cannot present this determining feeling to itself in immediate terms, since one can only express this feeling as thought, not as immediate feeling; and yet the feeling is something on which the I is dependent as a determinacy. It is something "for which the I is simply unable to hold itself responsible," even though all its explanations of the feeling must be ideal. It is with the notion of striving that Fichte tries to confront this circle.

STRIVING, NORMATIVITY, AND THE THING-IN-ITSELF

The striving subject is Fichte's way of confronting the bind described at the end of the previous section. While he thinks we cannot escape this circle, he conceives of the striving I as a way of ensuring that human subjectivity and mindedness are neither cut off from world by a thing-in-itself nor able to be considered to be causally determined by an external thing. At the same time, if the *Wissenschaftslehre* is to be more than a subjective idealism, thought must be limited because, as we have seen, without limitation there is no self-determination. The check is supposed to achieve this determination in the most minimal of ways: a mere impetus for the I to limit itself. However, much of the secondary literature disagrees over the status of that limitation. For some, that limit is external to the subject and reinstates a version of the thing-in-itself;⁵⁵ for others, the thing-in-itself is unquestionably eliminated by his approach.⁵⁶ What might be called the normative approach takes Fichte to be attempting to escape this dilemma by showing that our "normative commitments" could only be grounded in our spontaneity.

The latter approach, which has been most associated with Robert Pippin, stresses the continuity of concern of Kant, Fichte, and Hegel with the project of reason's self-grounding. He sums up Fichte's position this way: "Fichte's idealism in other words asserts the *self-sufficiency* or *autonomy* of let us say, the normative domain itself."⁵⁷ On this approach, the focus of Fichte's debate with Reinhold for the future direction of the critical philosophy was above all concerned with the status of our representing activities. What was required was a shift from Reinhold's language of representing to that of positing:

"This means to shift the question to: the problem of reasons, warrants, and away from the issue of what must be happening in the mind for a representation of an object to occur."⁵⁸ Fichte's transformation of the I into a positing agent rather than a thing or a play of faculties moves the I away from the language of causes and the given, thereby shifting the conceptual focus to the normative and explanatory role of reason. The centrality of Fichte's focus on freedom develops from his dissatisfaction with the concept/intuition antithesis in Kant. Pippin's emphasis on the autonomy of the normative provides an explanation for the self-limitation of reason that is consistent with the centrality of the spontaneity of the subject in Fichte's system. This approach is an important influence on the interpretation of Fichte I offer in this chapter; nevertheless, the role of the check, as outlined in the previous section, commits Fichte to more than a claim for the self-sufficiency of the "space of reasons."⁵⁹ The I's self-determination requires the external constraint of the check, which, while *explanatorily* limited to the space of reasons, nevertheless has for Fichte a status that is outside of the space of reasons.

On the normative approach to the self-grounding or self-limiting of the I or reason, the only constraints are the conceptual limitations of the space of reasons itself. This is why its self-determination is its self-legislation.⁶⁰ The self-consciousness of its capacity for self-legislation or autonomy is its freedom. This view captures an important trait in Fichte's antidogmatism, which ensures that freedom could not be found in an essential quality of the self. The *Wissenschaftslehre* "accounts for all consciousness, indeed, by reference to a thing that is present independently of any consciousness, but it does not forget that, even in the course of this explanation, it governs itself by its own laws and that in the course of reflecting on this, the independent factor again becomes a product of its own power of thought" (SK 247/SWI 280). The latter part of this passage situates the I's explanation of itself and its objects within a self-imposed and rule-governed space of reasons. This normative domain frames the interpretative or discursive engagement with objects and ourselves. The ego's normativity is affirmed in intellectual intuition. But the earlier part of this passage ("a thing that is present independently of any consciousness") presents a limit to that framework that is *outside* of the normative domain.⁶¹

As was discussed in the previous section, the check has to be recognized as genuinely independent of the I, without which the I could not be self-determining. We have already seen the necessary paradox in which the I finds itself: it is dependent upon an external object or the summons of another that moves it into action and so allows it to determine itself. All things understood as ideal depend on the I, but the I itself is dependent upon an independent object: "in respect of its existence the I is dependent; but in the determinations of this its existence it is absolutely independent" (SK 246/SW_I 279). But does this mean, as some have claimed, that if the normative domain is not in fact self-sufficient, then Fichte must thereby be reintroducing at least a modified version of the thing-in-itself? Beiser, for example, claims that the thing-in-itself is not jettisoned but is revised to capture the circularity that defines the finitude of consciousness. He argues that "the finite knowing subject is therefore forever caught between the noumenon that it creates and the thing-in-itself that transcends it, though it can forever push forward the boundaries between them."⁶²

This view captures more adequately than the purely normative approach the realistic strain of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. Even though the object cannot be *conceived* outside of its own explanatory powers, that is, outside of thought and reason, the object is not thereby reducible to those powers; indeed, it must evade those powers. Self-determination is thereby never satisfied. Each new explanation tries to satisfy itself with its description of the object, but this is impossible because the previously independent object, which has now become dependent on the I, must be underwritten by a "new" independent object since the ideality of the object is contingent upon on its independence.⁶³ Accordingly, the object is not "thereby abolished, but merely posited further out and so we might proceed out indefinitely without it ever being eliminated [*aufgehoben*]" (SK 247/SW_I 280).⁶⁴ This in effect reiterates the paradox mentioned previously: without an independent object, the I could not limit itself; it requires something outside itself, and "yet it must recognize, from the other side, that the latter exists only *for it*" (SK 247/SW_I 281). However, I don't think one can conclude from this, as Beiser does, that "although all of its own determinations are created or posited by the activity of the ego, there is still an extent to which it resists its activity and

so remains forever *indeterminable* and *unknowable*.⁶⁵ In this case the limitations of calling the independent object an “unknowable” thing-in-itself goes against the spirit of Beiser’s aim of presenting striving as unconstrained by any “insurmountable barrier.”⁶⁶ The check is not “unknowable”; rather, the process is one of constant revision. Consciousness keeps moving to explain the limitations of the object and of its knowing. This movement reflects its striving, which is the drive for reason to govern itself. Its movement forward is a constant process of self-transformation, which is the consequence of consciousness’s perpetual bid to satisfy its desire for self-determination in the face of limitations and of its own inadequate explanations of those limitations. The problem with construing the limit as unknowable is that it presents that limit as *fixed*, when this is precisely the view Fichte is trying to overcome by stripping intuition of its purely receptive role in experience. His striving subject is underwritten by a spontaneously conceived subject, consequently framing the constant revision of its explanations in terms of an unknowable object that is resistant to its explanations reintroduces the very concept/intuition dualism that Fichte is trying to overcome. To describe the object as unknowable appeals to precisely the conception of knowledge that is directly challenged by Fichte.

THE UNIFYING FUNCTION OF STRIVING

The *Wissenschaftslehre* is structured around two central and related antitheses: finite/infinite and freedom/limitation. While these divisions are not overcome, they do not remain dualisms. It is the I’s striving activity that connects these divisions. Its hovering (*schweben*) between the variations of these key oppositions—I/not-I, ideal/real, positing/checked, the thing-in-itself/the ideal, yearning/satisfaction, and so on—defines its very subjecthood. As we have already seen, the I strives to assert its freedom but it can never realize it in any absolute manner because it is finite. This finitude is the condition of the I’s infinite striving.⁶⁷ The I imposes itself on the world, but is always thrown back on itself and reduced to finitude. This

fluctuating and transformative movement of the striving I illustrates the kind of subtle position Fichte is expressing. The check to be overcome is neither a fixed thing-in-itself nor the external *cause* of positing. If it could be understood in either of these ways, Fichte's theory would be appealing to the myth of the given, and this is exactly what has to be rejected if the concept/intuition dualism is to be avoided. But Fichte's rejection of this dualism does not mean that the check is thereby purely an expression of human rationality.

The I strives to explain the check but it constantly evades explanation, and yet reason keeps moving to explain it. There is a circularity to the movement of the striving: the I strives to overcome the constraints by asserting its freedom, but those constraints throw the I back on itself and force it to confront the constraint by explaining the constraint and overcoming it. For example, Fichte says: "this hitherto unknown not-I that is responsible for the check whereby the self becomes an intelligence, *should be determined on its own account by the self*" (SK 221/SW_I 249). In this case the infinite element of the I (its striving to determine itself, to be its own cause) attempts to determine the check that constrains it in order for the I to reassert its self-determination. In a passage already cited, Fichte says that the I "governs itself by its own laws and that in the course of reflecting on this, the independent factor *again* becomes a product of its own power of thought" (SK 247/SW_I 280, my emphasis). The I wavers or hovers (*schweben*) from the constraint back to itself.

This movement in which the "independent factor *again* becomes a product of its own power of thought" appears to reduce feeling to thought, and there is a sense in which this is correct since this represents the limitation of rational reflection. The check can only be *understood* in rational terms, since there is no explanatory domain for the object outside of thought. Nevertheless, that the check evades explanation does not mean that the check is identical with the I's ideational activity. As Fichte puts it in the version of the *Wissenschaftslehre* from 1795 known as the *Grundriss*: "The original pure activity of the I is modified and at the same time shaped by the check which occurs" (EPW 256/SW_I 344). As we have already seen, the check or feeling is an essential, constitutive, and developing element of the I.

There is a realistic *and* an idealistic strain in the I. They are united in the striving activity, but only temporarily, and that shifting identity of subject and object is experience. With this shifting relation Fichte captures the fundamental openness of experience. Feeling is multiple and diverse, but is constantly redetermined or reexplained. A determination or explanation cannot circumscribe the fundamental multiplicity of feeling, and so there is constant fluctuation between freedom and limitation.

Fichte describes this movement as centrifugal and centripetal forces.⁶⁸ Infinite striving is centrifugal, but this is always checked and is “driven back upon itself” (its centripetal movement) “by something incapable of derivation from the I” (SK 242/SWI 275). The discussion of drive (*Trieb*) illustrates this tension, since drive can be understood as both *ideal* and *real*.⁶⁹ The drive moves outward toward an object, but it is the ideal activity that produces the desired object “so no drive can be felt, unless ideal activity is directed to the object thereof; and such an activity cannot be so directed, unless the real activity is limited” (SK 261/SWI 297). Drive exemplifies the I’s “self-reciprocal” relation: the drive both lacks causality and has causality; the drive is outside the I’s control as a motivating force that desires some object, but the I can accept or reject the drive’s desired object. The drive itself, insofar as it has an object, is ideal; the directedness of the drive is not simply given but is capable of modification. (Indeed, as we shall see shortly, the aspiration of moral action is the unity of drive with freedom.)⁷⁰

This interplay between freedom and limitation relies on the Kantian notions of autonomy and heteronomy.⁷¹ While Kant limits these terms to primarily moral considerations, Fichte uses this terminology (and the more general terminology of freedom and limitation) far more broadly.⁷² Fichtean self-determination is not a straightforward adoption of autonomy; rather, he attempts to reconcile heteronomy and autonomy. We get a glimpse of how Fichte unites these two notions in his various discussions of the ethical law. In the Kantian story, autonomy is only possible under the condition where I legislate myself to act in light of a norm that is authoritative because it is universalizable. I act autonomously when my action is *completely* self-imposed. If my action is initiated by feelings, desires, drives, and so on, then the action is characterized as heteronomous. The role that

constraint plays in the *Wissenschaftslehre*, as the condition of action and freedom, is very similar to Kant's account of autonomy; however, Fichte's account of moral action cannot be described as fully self-imposed rational legislation. In Fichte's case, genuinely moral action aspires to a unity of feeling and willing (of the real and the ideal).⁷³ While there may not be an identity of desire and rational moral action, the feeling of desire is nevertheless a condition for any willing, since "anyone who wants to be released from desire wants to be released from consciousness" (FTP 295). Even though Fichte argues that the unity of feeling and reason cannot be achieved, it is his view that we should aspire to achieve such a harmony.⁷⁴ While I cannot examine Fichte's account of morality in any detail,⁷⁵ the relation between desire and moral action nevertheless mirrors the more general point that the constraint required for freedom and indeed the I itself presupposes a reciprocal relation between its limitation and its determinability.⁷⁶

The notion of a striving subject evokes the practical experience of self-determination. The *Wissenschaftslehre* describes, in very abstract terms, a process of working through and adjusting commitments. Our theorizations of the world require willing, and the willing requires an object to overcome or a norm to affirm or reject and so on. Our willing can only be understood as self-determined if there is a self-affirmation of the norms guiding one's action.⁷⁷ The self-determining or self-legislating subject is not a purely theoretical or transcendental enterprise; it also requires the practical experience of arguing, claiming, and judging.⁷⁸ The self-legislative quality of freedom can only be seen in working through these norms in experience. However, the nature of Fichte's project also requires him to attempt to ground these commitments. Within the systematic structure of Fichte's system, thought is not able to ground itself; it has to be constrained by more than the space of reasons. Its limitation requires a realist constraint. But the constraint of the check is not dogmatic; it does not present truth as fixed in the world or in a faculty of the mind.⁷⁹ In this sense Fichte tries to overcome the heteronomy/autonomy divide, since the feelings, drives, and yearnings are a constraint on freedom, but they are constraints that give the I the opportunity to determine itself. The self-limitation characteristic of autonomy is only achieved because of the I's heteronomy. Moreover, that movement, in

which we attempt to reconcile these aspects of ourselves, is essentially open because of the reciprocity of these elements.

The notion of a striving subject is intended as a kind of continuous bridge between the realistic and idealistic elements of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. In striving, the aspiration to explain the world and ourselves is presented as infinite, and yet it is restricted by the check. This realist constraint is necessary and yet is constantly overcome by striving activity. As we have seen, in order to be consistent with his critique of the thing-in-itself, intuition is stripped of its purely receptive role in experience. This would appear to provide support to the claim for the exclusivity of the space of reasons or for seeing Fichte as a subjective idealist, since the spontaneity of the I would appear to reign unimpeded were it not for a sensible constraint on reason. But the feeling associated with the check cannot be reduced to intuition or sensation; the check is a realist constraint that modifies thought without the receptivity of intuition.

The I's striving unites its realistic and idealistic elements. As we have seen, the opposition between freedom and constraint that runs throughout the *Wissenschaftslehre* presents a picture of the I as fundamentally divided.⁸⁰ But that division does not reinstate a *static* mind-body dualism. The very concept of striving involves finitude; finitude functions as the limit to be overcome by the I's striving. The check which effects that finitude does not present a fixed boundary; rather, it is a boundary that is constantly redefined. In effect, the tension between these two strains of the I is what gives the I its self-feeling. It maintains itself in the interaction between these two strains. The I is the "contact-point" (*Berührungspunkt*) between freedom and nature (SK 252/SW1 287). The I's striving activity constantly reworks that boundary as a consequence of its confrontation with its own limitation. According to the *Wissenschaftslehre*: "the ultimate ground of all reality for the self is an original interaction between the something outside of it of which nothing more can be said, save that it must be utterly opposed to the self" (SK 246/SW1 279). This interaction and reciprocity is the dynamic framework within which the I has experience.

There is a persistent perspectival fluctuation, between the finite and the infinite, for example: "The I cannot posit itself as limited without at the

same time crossing the boundary and distancing the latter from itself. As it crosses this boundary, however, the I must at the same time posit itself as limited by the boundary" (EPW 266/SW_I 358). The I strives to be self-determining and self-identical; it strives for a harmony of itself with what limits it; but it in fact inhabits the reciprocity between the infinite striving and the limitation. The boundary that the I inhabits is its self-limitation; it is driven to "fill itself out to infinity," but this drive is always limited and the limitation summons its reflective activity, through which it tries to determine its drives or feelings. The process in which it attempts to determine these constraints is not something that is ever achieved; its reflection never contains the check, the feeling, or the not-I. It remains forever striving against these constraints.

3

HEGEL

Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination

THE EXAMINATION OF Hegelian subjectivity poses significant difficulties, primarily because Hegel's subject is not theorized and defined in the way that, for example, Descartes's, Kant's, and Fichte's are. Hegel does not provide a clear view of how his subject should be conceived. Even the well-known discussion of self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and its compressed summary in the *Encyclopedia* do not provide a detailed exposition of self-consciousness, nor do they present an examination of the subject who undergoes the experiences in the *Phenomenology*. Similarly, the *Philosophy of Right* does not provide an extensive exposition of the subject who underlies the moral, economic, social, and political spheres that this text examines. While the *Encyclopedia Philosophy of Mind* outlines the bare bones of the structure of the I, in terms of self-feeling and self-awareness, these are not descriptions of the elemental shape of consciousness upon which Hegel's philosophical system is built. Self-feeling, soul, and the other developmental expressions of subjective spirit that he describes in the *Encyclopedia* are primarily anthropological examinations. The *Encyclopedia* does not provide sustained descriptions of the experiencing subject that is at heart of his systematic works.

Hegel's neglect in defining his subject is not an oversight. As with all of the core concepts in his thought, it has to be understood in the context of

the systematic unfolding of the entire text. A detailed examination of subjectivity, consciousness, and self-consciousness takes place in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The text elaborates, explores, and transforms these notions along the extended journey of the text. It is in the totality of that movement that we have to look to understand his view of subjectivity. The defining character of this subject's self-relation is bound to and transformed by the experience of the natural consciousness (the text's protagonist). This means that any examination of the subject in Hegel's thought has to look at the general movement of his thought, weaving its way through complex social, historical, and conceptual determinations. The specific way Hegel describes his subject must also be set against his reception of Kant's critical philosophy, since this and Fichte's own attempt to extend Kant's thought are the most important factors shaping Hegel's formulation of self-consciousness.

Presenting the model of subjectivity that Hegel establishes in the *Phenomenology*, which is the primary concern of this chapter, requires some examination of the key conceptual problems that Hegel inherits from his predecessors. The development of Hegel's account of subjectivity is set against the view of subjectivity expressed by Kant and Fichte. Other figures are important—Descartes, Aristotle, Spinoza, and Schelling—but it is Fichte and Kant (the reception of the critical philosophy) that frame the set of problems that define his philosophical project, not just his view of subjectivity. Hegel's view of subjectivity cannot be isolated from the core concepts, issues, and problems that Kant bequeathed his successors. Of particular concern for the view of subjectivity developed in the *Phenomenology* is the way Kant conceived the conditions for self-consciousness (apperception) and his failure to resolve the concept/intuition distinction. Hegel's transformation of the former and the way he tries to avoid the mind/world dualism that the latter involves represent perhaps the two most powerful influences on the method and movement of the *Phenomenology* and the view of subjectivity it articulates. Both of these issues are examined in what follows. While on the face of it the dualism of concept and intuition might seem a peripheral issue for a theory of subjectivity, overcoming the radical separation of subject and world that results from Kant's two-moded account of cognition is central to understanding the model of subjectivity Hegel

describes in all his works. As I will argue in chapters 5 and 6, the failure of Deleuze and Derrida to recognize this leads them to a decisive misunderstanding of Hegel's project.

In the *Phenomenology*, the character of its subject's self-relation cannot be explained other than through the various transformations of spirit and the changes to the subject's self-understanding that the text systematically unfolds. The conditions and relations that underlie that self-understanding are in a constant state of transformation, especially in modernity. Moreover, Hegel's account of subjectivity is not separable from his analysis of reason and core notions like the dialectic and the Concept. Where Descartes's subject has a singular relation to its knowing, Hegel's model of self-relation is mediated through conditions or a discursive horizon that is external to the subject. The self-understanding of the *Phenomenology*'s subject is articulated in and through the way Hegel develops the notions of reason, community, spirit, law, education, empirical science, religion, and so on, that is, all the shapes of knowing that the text examines. The natural consciousness progressively comes to understand the way in which the interplay between such things produces the objective conditions of its knowledge of the world and itself. At the same time, it slowly comes to understand itself in terms of these conditions, which can be seen to set the interpretative limits of its agency, knowing, and its self-understanding. This is what is achieved in absolute knowing. It is in conceiving of itself in terms of these objective conditions for knowledge, which supersede the singularity of the self and yet are the conditions for consciousness, that the conscious subject must be taken to be essentially self-transcending. It is this self-transcending quality, among other things, that allows, as we will see in subsequent chapters, for a far more productive exchange between Hegel and poststructuralism than has traditionally been the case.

THE LIMITS OF KANT'S EPISTEMOLOGY

Hegel's major works are littered with phrases such as "Reason is the Concept giving itself reality"¹ or "everything hangs on apprehending and

expressing the truth not merely as *substance* but also equally as *subject*" (PhS §17/GW9 14). Such passages, which appear to assert a given identity of subject, object, and reason, have been interpreted by Hegel scholars as resolving residual problems in early-nineteenth-century philosophy by reverting to a pre-Kantian metaphysics. Charles Taylor, with exemplary erudition and his characteristic simple and focused prose, began Hegel's rehabilitation in the English-speaking world. Prior to the publication of his *Hegel* in 1975, English-language interest in Hegel was largely in his historical, social, and political thought. These parts of his system were taken to be of value because it was thought they could be considered independent of his logic and metaphysics. The latter were by and large neglected by mainstream Anglophone philosophy in this period because they were considered as advocating an implausible and outdated panlogicism. In what was becoming an increasingly antimetaphysical environment, the success of Taylor's book was remarkable given the robustly metaphysical way Taylor characterized Hegelian spirit. This is a representative passage defining spirit: "The resolution of opposition in man required that we refer beyond him to a larger rational plan, which is that of *Geist*. . . . For Hegel the absolute is subject. That which underlies and manifests itself in all reality . . . a divine life flowing through everything, Hegel understood as spirit."²

Taylor's strongly metaphysical interpretation of Hegel was intended to show Hegel as responding to an inherited set of problems in the Kantian program—the concept/intuition distinction, the thing-in-itself, and the real/ideal distinction. Taylor's account of Hegelian *Geist* combines Kant's account of practical freedom with the romantic concern to resolve the alienation of modern human life from nature. Since the human subject and everything in the world are expressions of this coming to be of *Geist*, the distinctly human capacity for autonomy does not have to be considered as necessarily entailing a divorce from nature, as it is in modernity. Taylor's approach appears to explain two distinct elements in Hegel's thought: Kantian freedom and Spinozistic substance. Hegel's spirit subject can thereby be understood as a concerted attempt to resolve the Enlightenment problem of how freedom can be understood as self-legislation without irrevocably alienating us from the natural world.

This monistic self-disclosing spirit corrects the alienation that Taylor describes, but the price of this is a reading of Hegel that is both implausible and so metaphysical that it is surprising that Taylor's book found such a welcome reception. The set of problems that Taylor considered Hegel to be correcting with this self-positing spirit is not resolved in the way that Taylor thinks it is. The subjectivism of Kant's and Fichte's thought does not have to be reconnected with the object world by considering Hegel's absolute as the coming to be of all that exists, which fulfills itself through the progressive unfolding of rational self-consciousness.

Such robust metaphysical views of Hegel persist,³ but most contemporary Hegel scholarship does not think that Hegel resolved the residual problems in the critical philosophy in the way that Taylor does. Core claims that Hegel makes for his project, such as those about having to conceive of substance as subject, that "reason is the Concept giving itself reality," or those about the absolute as unity of concept and reality, have come to be understood not as a reversion to precritical metaphysics, but as an extension of Kant's critical project.⁴ The broad concern of that project, which both Hegel and Fichte adopt, is the idea that reason must, by virtue of its own capacity for self-correction, be considered as establishing and legitimating its own norms. A transcendent realm of normativity such as a Platonic idea, a thing-in-itself, or some given way in which the world is cannot be the standard to which reason appeals to ascertain the true. However, the question remains: if we cannot appeal to a self-positing *Geist* to explain this self-correction, then how does spirit correct itself?

The influential German Hegel interpreter Klaus Hartmann responds to this question. He argues that Hegel avoids such a conception of spirit by presenting its self-correction as self-determined.⁵ Rather than being considered as a self-positing *Geist* or a metaphysical substance, Hartmann argues that Hegel's overriding systematic concern should instead be considered as the continuation of Kant's critical philosophy. Hegel is therefore engaged in an attempt to establish that thought can be self-grounding. The self-determined character of our social, political, and cultural world is thereby presented as the guiding idea of Hegel's thought. The central problem with understanding Hegel's thought as nonmetaphysical and at the heart of all

post-Kantian philosophy is precisely how this rational self-grounding can legitimate its claims. On Hartmann's interpretation, the elaborate necessary transformation of the text from one shape of spirit to the next or from one logical category to the next is presented as a necessary progression from one concept to the next. It does not appeal to a given or an object behind representations to which one could appeal to legitimate the true. While this made Hegel rigorously nonmetaphysical, the problem, however, was that this beautifully coherent and logically consistent system might be, to use John McDowell's now famous phrase, "representing the operations of spontaneity as a frictionless spinning in a void."⁶ Understood in this way, Hegel's thought might simply represent an elaborate logical coherentism that has no basis for claiming that the external world, human knowledge, or thought could be explained by these concepts.

Hegel is presented as rejecting the given and the problematic dependence on Kantian sensory intuition, about which more will be said shortly, by retreating into a purely systematic discursive terrain. It will be argued here, however, that this fails to understand the way Hegel attempts to resolve the concept/intuition or the understanding/sensibility dualism. When Hegel's response to this problem is understood, Hartmann's version of Hegel's project is implausible. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, Hegel's response to this dualism has a number of implications for reconceiving Hegel's reception in poststructuralism.⁷ He overcomes the dualism by establishing the conceptual nature of experience, which is stripped of its passivity and imbued with spontaneity, but he does so without relegating the object domain to the sphere of an unknowable thing-in-itself or an empirical content from which thought is alienated. My concern here is twofold: to explain the way Hegel's idealism overcomes Kant's fraught formulation of the relation of the sensible to the understanding, and to show the implications that Hegel's resolution of this problem has for his account of subjectivity.

Hegel's critique of Kant is the subject of great debate from both the Kantian and the Hegelian sides.⁸ Establishing the legitimacy or otherwise of Hegel's critique of Kant is not the primary concern of this book. What is at issue is establishing why he claims that both Kant's and Fichte's idealism

is subjective. Examining the Kantian arm of this critique will require an investigation into what Hegel considers to be the dualistic formulation of the concept/intuition relation. This will then put us in a position to examine the way Hegel articulates and attempts to resolve this dualism, a project that is both central to his idealism and at the heart of poststructuralism's misunderstanding of Hegel. Whether this dualism is resolvable within the Kantian system itself and whether the division has a legitimate role to play within Kantian idealism are not issues that are directly relevant to this discussion.⁹ My concern is primarily to examine how Hegel's dissatisfaction with Kant's attempts to overcome the opposition of the sensible and the intellectual structures the development of his own thought. Before looking at how Hegel's account of self-consciousness responds to these concerns, we need to briefly consider the dualism that Hegel and indeed all the post-Kantians sought to correct, and why Hegel took this to be a marker of a subjective metaphysics.

Kant's critical philosophy posits a distinction between the thing-in-itself and appearance. Establishing what he intends with this distinction and the implications of this for his idealism is a defining concern of Kant scholarship. It can be conceived as a fundamental ontological commitment to a distinct realm, inaccessible to human cognition, or simply a methodological distinction that is developed to posit merely the *idea* that there are things independent of human cognition. There are many other plausible interpretations of this distinction. In this context, however, all that needs noting is that this distinction assumes that human cognition is essentially conceptual or discursive. The conditions that allow the experience of objects cannot issue from objects in themselves. These cognitive conditions are not mirrors of the external world but reflect the conceptuality of self-consciousness, that is, its spontaneity and not an external object independent of experience. The standard question in early modern theories of knowledge is how representations connect to the objects they represent. Kant's response is that the limit of knowledge is that we are unable to leap out of our way of representing objects to see how objects are in themselves. However, separating the object from our representations in this way raises the skeptical possibility that the object could be other to its representation. In this case, the

categories by which represented objects are rendered intelligible cannot be equated with the object: “What may be the case with objects in themselves and abstracted from all this receptivity of our sensibility remains entirely unknown to us. We are acquainted with nothing except our way of perceiving them” (CPR A42/B59).

Why Kant conceives of the thing-in-itself in this way has its origin in his attempt to resolve the dualism of sensibility and understanding. The two defining strands of eighteenth-century metaphysics, Lockean empiricism and Leibnizian rationalism, give opposing accounts of objects and our knowledge of them. Sensibility in the empiricist account is the cognitive faculty that delivers to us the truth of objects, while for rationalism it is the understanding. Empiricism and rationalism sought to understand the natural world in itself: one considered experience to be the basis for knowledge, while the other thought knowledge issued solely from reason. Such claims appeal to distinct faculties of mind—“understanding” and “sensibility”—that facilitate an immediate relationship to the world. Kant’s precritical writings, which have their most cogent formulation in his *Inaugural Dissertation* from 1770, confront this opposition. In that precritical work he does not privilege either of the two sides as the legitimate faculty. In the *Inaugural Dissertation* Kant asserts the legitimacy of *both* of these accounts of cognition. His innovation was to claim that the cognized world is known in two distinct ways.¹⁰ This is how he describes the situation: “It is thus clear that things which are thought sensitively are representations of things as they appear, while things which are intellectual are representational of things as they are.”¹¹ There are accordingly two distinct epistemic domains (appearances and things-in-themselves) that have attendant distinct cognitive capacities (sensibility and understanding). In affirming the legitimacy of both faculties in these writings, Kant distinguished himself from his contemporaries, who for most part aligned themselves with either Lockean empiricism or Leibnizian transcendental realism. In pre-Kantian metaphysics there was a general agreement that knowledge was unified; what was contested was the source of that unity.

The *Inaugural Dissertation* is decisive in the transition to Kant’s critical works of the 1780s because the two cognitive capacities that he introduces

in that work, sensibility and the understanding, are, as Hegel might put it, “superseded [*aufgehoben*]” in the *Critique of Pure Reason* by presenting intuitions and concepts not as separate spheres of knowledge, but rather as distinct arms of a *unified* knowledge. Kant considers sensibility and understanding, which broadly correspond to the opposing approaches to knowledge of Locke and Leibniz, as distinct “sources of representation . . . which could judge about things with objective validity only in conjunction” (CPR A271/B327). The *Inaugural Dissertation*, however, did not provide an account of how intuitions, which emanated from the sensible experience of objects, and discursive capacities were related. This issue is corrected in the critical philosophy; there the two cognitive capacities that Leibniz and Locke present singularly are conjoined. Concepts and intuitions *together* provide the conditions for cognition and the unified experience of objects.

The question that is bequeathed to post-Kantian idealism and Kant’s commentators is whether or not his critical philosophy is successful in unifying the two spheres of cognition described in the *Inaugural Dissertation*. The critical Kant of the 1780s presents them as separate *sources* of a unified knowledge. Despite Kant’s attempt to demonstrate their unity, a concern was raised, initially by Maimon: once their separateness was posited, could they be conjoined? Hegel’s accusation in his early Jena writings, and which he maintained throughout his career, that Kant’s idealism is subjective has its basis in the idea that Kant fails to resolve this dualism. Within the Kant literature there is great debate as to how to understand this division; indeed, just how this division is understood can be seen as delineating the many camps of Kant interpretation.

Henry Allison argues that this distinction does not establish a division between a minded world of the understanding and a way in which the world is in itself; appearances and things-in-themselves are just “two differing ways of *considering* things.”¹² The limits Kant places on knowledge do not create a noumenal realm of truth beyond human knowledge: “The claim is not *things* transcending human cognition cannot exist (this would make the conditions ontological rather than epistemic) but merely that such things cannot count as objects for us. . . . Objects must conform to the conditions of their representation.”¹³ Human cognition is essentially discursive.

The distinction between appearances and the thing-in-itself is not an unbridgeable supersensible reality; instead it simply articulates the essentially active or discursive character of cognition. The appearance/thing-in-itself division has a transcendental purpose. Experiencing an object as something requires epistemic conditions. In this sense “objects conform” to human cognition. This division recognizes that what is taken to be true in experience reflects the activity of the cognitive structure of mind, that is, the way it represents rather than a thing-in-itself. Knowledge of objects cannot be independent of the “cognitive conditions” that are the conditions of any judgment, knowledge, or experience. This way of conceiving Kant’s project brings it much more in line with Hegel’s, since it is premised on the idea that objectivity is inseparable from epistemic conditions. The objectivity of the discursive is something that Hegel, through a complex set of arguments, also tries to establish. However, as we will see, his own criticism of Kant, in contrast to the interpretation given above by Allison, is that the way he conceives of the categories restricts his thought to the subjective.

Hegel was sympathetic to Kant’s project: knowledge required bridging the two competing claims to truth—the object world of empiricism and the rational mind of rationalism. In a work from 1802–03, this is how Hegel described this opposition: “What are called realism and idealism are developed entirely at the standpoint of the antithesis, and part company on the question whether the somewhat that is color is grounded in the object or in the subject, in the active or in the passive side of consciousness. . . . Realism leaves to the subject only the formal activity of comparing the similarity in being, idealism . . . leaves nothing at all to the object.”¹⁴ Hegel argued that while Kant’s aspiration is also to overcome this division, he was unable to achieve this. The division between appearances and things-in-themselves preserved the very division that Kant’s critical thought sought to close. Many of the commentaries on Hegel’s critique of Kant argue that he misinterprets the thing-in-itself by conceiving it as the realm of the real, necessarily cut off from cognition by its unknowability. Allison argues that Hegel’s interpretation of Kant, by dividing the real from cognition, inaugurates what he calls the “Myth of the Noumenal.”¹⁵ It is not my intention to defend Hegel from what many commentators argue is a misinterpretation

of Kant, though I think the legitimacy of Hegel's criticism can be defended.¹⁶ Regardless of whether or not Hegel begins the Myth of the Noumenal, Hegel's dissatisfaction with the way Kant presents the concept/intuition division is central to understanding his idealism. Before describing Hegel's response, we need to briefly describe the role concept and intuition play in the epistemology of Kant's critical philosophy.

Kant distinguished two elements in cognition (concepts and intuitions) that correspond to distinct faculties of mind: understanding and sensibility. The understanding is the active component of thought (discursive and spontaneous) that gives meaningful form to the sensory manifold. Sensibility is the passive faculty through which we receive sensory information: "Through [the receptivity of an impression/representation] an object is *given* to us; through [the understanding] an object is *thought* in relation to that representation (as a mere determination of the mind)" (CPR A50/B74). Kant argues that these two faculties are the separate sources of a unified knowledge. Hegel contests this claim. Kant's two-sourced approach to knowledge does not deliver a unified cognition. The opposing forms of cognition described in the *Inaugural Dissertation* are not unified in Kant's critical philosophy. The critical philosophy continues to separate mind from world by presenting them as separate sources of knowledge. Hegel's challenge is to overcome this division in a way that presents thoughts that "are not merely our thoughts but at the same time the in-itself of things and of the object-world [*Gegenständlichen*] in general" (EnL §4122). This is the basis of Hegel's claim that Kant's metaphysics is subjective.

In Hegel's early works on Kant, such as *Faith and Knowledge*, the focus of his criticism does not concentrate on the thing-in-itself as a sphere of truth inaccessible to the human mind. Hegel's complaint is that the categories of thought are restricted to the sphere of appearances. Hegel, by so arguing, is not asserting that the categories are therefore unable to produce knowledge; the issue is that they are limited and can only be considered as expressions of human mindedness, not of things-in-themselves.¹⁷ Hegel does not deny that one can think of intuitions and concepts distinctly; his point is that they cannot be separated in the way Kant does without also restricting human knowledge and generating skeptical concerns about that

knowledge.¹⁸ The general issue here is that once Kant separates concept and intuition as distinct sources of cognition, with corresponding distinct faculties of mind, he has great difficulty putting them back together.

In an important and often cited passage, Hegel remarks: “even the Kantian objectivity of thinking itself is in turn only subjective insofar as thoughts, despite being universal and necessary determinations, are, according to Kant, *merely our* thoughts and distinguished from what the thing is *in itself* by an insurmountable gulf” (EnL §4122). As we have seen, a fundamental distinction of his critical philosophy, one that Hegel thinks Kant simply assumes, is between concepts and intuitions. Thought and the categories by which it makes sense of the world, “the rules for” the understanding (CPR B145), are tied exclusively to human spontaneity and are not, Hegel thinks, able to be said to be of the world. I will have cause to discuss the transcendental unity of apperception shortly, but for the moment we need only be aware that apperception is what allows the objects of experience to be conceptualized. The critical issue is that there is no knowledge available for us independent of the synthesizing function of apperception. The categories are the means by which the received sensory content is rendered intelligible. The categories allow the experience of the manifold.

Hegel describes the categories in the above passage as subjective. Curiously, in the same sentence he declares them also to be “universal and necessary.” The implication of this is that the categories are the only way in which Hegel thinks the world can be made sense of; they are the transcendental conditions of experience and knowledge. However, because Kant thinks the categories and thought more generally provide a knowledge that is only for us and not of the object in itself, the knowledge that results from the combining process of intuitions and concepts is not objective. Hegel does not think we should rehabilitate a metaphysically weighty thing-in-itself as a means to avoid the limitations of the subjectivism of Kantian knowledge. Taking his cue from Fichte, Hegel argues that the distinction between concept and intuition is a dualism that cuts off mind from world, since knowledge appears not to be of objects, but only of our concept of them. Overcoming this dualism is of central concern to Hegel’s Logic and is similarly important for the way Hegel conceives self-consciousness and experience

in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Hegel's absolute idealism, conceived as the corrective to the subjectivism of Fichte and Kant, is premised on the idea that thought has to be able to make claims about itself, ideas, and objects of experience that are more than purely self-referential ("frictionless spinning in a void"). In order to achieve this, Hegel reconceives how we should understand the intuited "content" of experience. While Hegel does not keep the language of intuitions and he does not make appeal to faculties—in the way Kant does—to describe cognition, the way Hegel reframes experience nevertheless preserves a notion of intuition, but one that is unable to be opposed to conceptuality.

HEGEL'S CRITIQUE OF FICHTE

As we have seen in the previous discussion, Hegel thinks the categories by which we experience and judge are bound to human mindedness—to the self-determining and spontaneous features of mind. Hegel wants to preserve the self-determination of the I without cutting the subject off from the object, that is, he wants to avoid the subjectivism of the Kantian program. His attempt to overcome the dichotomy of concept and intuition has decisive implications for the view of subjectivity he develops (and just about everything else in his thought). As we saw in chapter 2, Fichte's revised notion of subjectivity also develops in response to the dualism of concept and intuition and the problem of the thing-in-itself. While critical of the thing-in-itself, Fichte nevertheless preserves the idea of an external constraint on the I's self-positing. Fichte thought the realization of the critical project could only be achieved by showing that knowledge was not given its content by a passively conceived model of intuition. The subject was *active* in the determination of the intuitive component of knowledge as well. In striving against the constraint of the "real," reason drives itself to further self-determination. This is a process of self-transformation that is achieved as consciousness confronts and overcomes the limitations of its inadequate explanations of the objects of experience.

Hegel discerns two related problems with Fichte's self-positing and self-transforming subject. Firstly, the way Fichte's subject posits and redefines its knowledge in confrontation with an indeterminate constraint results in an irreconcilable dualism of I and not-I, which is unable to overcome the very mind/world dualism that Fichte sought to close. The freedom that Fichte aspired to give his subject so that it might break free of the dogmatic determinism of naturalism falls prey to the same mind/world dualism that plagues Kant's concept/intuition distinction. Secondly, his model of the self assumes the identity of I = I in all its experiences. As we saw in the previous chapter in the discussion of the not-I, Fichte's subject experiences an external world, in some very minimal sense, but the way he conceives the relation of the I to the not-I has to be considered a *posit* of the subject. In this way, Hegel argues: "the Ego does not sense and intuit things; it intuits only *its* sensing and intuiting and *knows only of its knowing*" (FK 156, my emphasis). Fichte's model of the self is a self-consciousness that knows only its own knowing. The objects of its experience can only be considered as products of how this self conceives its own knowing. In effect, knowledge of the not-I is a posit of the I, and therefore all of this subject's attempts to know the objects of experience are an aspiration of a subject to identify with the objects of experience. This identification is exclusively a *self-identity*, since all the subject sees in the object is itself.

Fichte's insight into the limitations of the reflective model of self-consciousness is well known.¹⁹ As we saw previously, the immediate context of Fichte's analysis of subjectivity was his critique of Reinhold's analysis of representation. Reinhold's first principle is the representational character of consciousness. Fichte found the representing activity of consciousness to be an unsatisfactory first principle. He argued that any representation presupposes an existing condition that makes such representation possible. There are a number of distinctions involved in Reinhold's model of consciousness, but the primary one is between the subject and its representations. That is, the subject sees its representations as distinct from its subjectivity; nevertheless, as with Kantian apperception, those representations must be assumed to be known by a subject to be its own. Schulze, in his review of Reinhold, argues that he must thereby be presupposing underneath the so-called first

principle another principle: the self-awareness of the subject. In order to be aware that I am representing an object and relating that representation to myself, I must be self-aware. Reinhold had assumed that self-awareness had the same structure as consciousness's representation of an object. Since the representational character of consciousness is the first principle, self-consciousness must have a representation of itself. But what is put before itself in the representation of itself?

The problem, as we saw in the last chapter, was how to conceive of the subject that comes prior to its representing activities. Reinhold's representational model of consciousness presupposes a distinction between the representation, the subject, and what is represented (the object). This model assumes a base self-awareness: I know that I am representing something. The problem for Reinhold is that the character of this subject cannot be representational, since it has to be able to distinguish itself from its representations. The subject has to know that it is representing objects. It could not do this if its self-knowledge was representational because this would require another subject who would know itself to be the one to whom the representation is being referred, that is, a subject different from the one who is doing the representing.

The upshot of this regress, as I have said, is that Fichte, if he is to find something like a foundation of philosophical knowledge or a more adequate principle on which to base a system of knowledge, has to look at the condition of the representing, that is, to the subject. Correcting the deficiency in Reinhold's strategy required conceiving the subject in a way that posits its self-awareness non-representationally. In presenting this condition—that is, self-consciousness—Fichte also had to avoid some specific problems with standard conceptions of self-consciousness, problems that he was instrumental in highlighting. How should the subject's self-relating activity be conceived such that it is not dependent on something outside it or a foundational self that is somehow prior to its own self-awareness? This is how Dieter Henrich describes this problem in an important paper on Fichte: "The theory that the self is reflection confirms . . . that the self grasps itself *only* through its return back into itself. . . . But how can self-consciousness know that it has grasped itself, if an object-self has come

about only via the self's act of reflection? Obviously it can know this only if it knew itself before."²⁰ This model of self-consciousness assumes a paradoxical form of reflective self-relation that is pervasive in the history of philosophy.

Fichte, as we have seen in his response to Reinhold, attempts to show that the subject is the condition of representing. This I is not a ground in any Cartesian sense, but is better conceived as a radical attempt to establish the subject and its knowing on the basis of the I's spontaneity. Fichte describes it this way: "the *self posits itself*, and by virtue of this mere self-assertion it *exists*" (SK 97/SWI 96). Fichte's self-positing subject is developed to correct the erroneous conclusion that Schulze draws from his critique of Reinhold: that the self has to be a *thing* independent from its representations. Fichte argues that the self is independent of its representations but it is not a thing-in-itself as Schulze maintained. The subject's self-relation is not one in which it is present before itself in the same way as the objects it represents. Instead, Fichte conceives of the primary self-relation as a type of self-initiating self-awareness or intellectual intuition. His transcendental subject is not an object that one can reflect on and discover (though this of course does not preclude reflecting on ourselves to examine our beliefs, feeling, and thoughts). Fichte's transcendental subject could only be grasped as an act of intellectual intuition. This moment of self-grasping is an immediate consciousness in which subject and object are identical (IWL 114/SWI 529). This is Fichte's famous $I = I$, a notion that Hegel finds problematic.

In his essay on Fichte and Schelling written in Jena in 1801, usually referred to as the *Differenzschrift*, Hegel is clearly under the spell of Schelling and is very critical of Fichte. These criticisms in no way diminish the profound importance of Fichte for Hegel. Hegel in many ways saw himself as continuing Fichte's systematic project. His criticisms of Fichte are nevertheless important in the development of his own account of self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology*. In the *Differenzschrift* Hegel initiates a discussion that remained with him for his entire career, and it is one that reflects both his historical and his philosophical interest. In the context of this early yet formative essay, Hegel discusses the need of philosophy. In this work, as with all his subsequent systematic works, Hegel is concerned with establishing

a philosophical form that is adequate to modern life, but that adequate philosophical form still had to address the fundamental problem of philosophy: how to think the absolute. In Jena, Hegel was profoundly influenced by his younger colleague Schelling. Despite his admiration for Schelling, Hegel did not consider his thought as offering a philosophical form that was adequate to modern life. The development of Hegel's thought in the *Phenomenology* and the *Science of Logic*, with their core claim that philosophy must be science and their focus on finding the right philosophical method, is an attempt to give the modern era an appropriate philosophical form—the dialectic—but in the *Differenzschrift* this method is only in its infancy.

Hegel approaches Fichte's thought in this early work through the distinction between reflection and speculation. His later writings, most notably the preface to the *Phenomenology*, also appeal to this distinction. There he aligns these terms with the distinction between understanding (*Verstand*) and reason. Hegel's characterization of Fichte's philosophy in *Faith and Knowledge* (a work contemporaneous with the *Differenzschrift* and also published in *The Critical Journal of Philosophy*) as a philosophy of reflection positions Fichte in a line of philosophical development that begins with Lockean empirical psychology: "Kant, Jacobi and Fichte . . . are the completion of this empirical psychology" (FK 63). Reflective philosophy operates according to the logic of the understanding, a term he associates with finite thinking, which produces but cannot resolve antitheses. Reflective philosophy—unlike reason—cannot think contradiction.²¹ What characterizes the philosophy of reflection is the antithetical separation of subject and object. Fichte in particular appears to set the I up against the not-I in a way that makes this division unbridgeable. Fichte correctly conceives the positing quality of consciousness and the importance of an object domain of nature against which it must strive, but the limit of this approach is that he cannot overcome their opposition: "Reflection may set up its analysis of the absolute wholly in terms of an antinomy. One term of this antinomy is the Ego, i.e., indeterminateness, or self-determination, and the other is the object, determinateness" (DFS 139). The subjective metaphysics of Kant and Fichte is not speculative. Reflection in this context refers to the inability to think the whole, the absolute, or the eternal. The thought of Fichte and

Kant—"The culture [*Kultur*] of reflection raised to system" (FK 64)—is cut off from the absolute because reason, as they conceive it, is confined to the subjective. It is an opposition that expresses itself in Fichte's case as the perpetual striving of the I to be identical with the not-I.

Reflective philosophy has a barrier that cuts it off from reason: "In this situation philosophy cannot aim at the cognition of God, but only at what it called the cognition of man" (FK 65). Hegel is largely consistent in *Faith and Knowledge* and the *Differenzschrift* in asserting that Kant's and Fichte's programs are subjective: "The principle of Fichte's system is the pure thinking that thinks itself, the identity of the subject and the object, in the form Ego = Ego" (DFS 81). His whole system is grounded on this self-positing I that is set out in opposition to the object domain. The self-positing I is enclosed within its own freedom. It presents itself as an opposition to the natural world (the not-I) that is outside its domain of freedom. Nature is accordingly a causal domain that can only be described in the most minimal of terms: it is an "absolute opposite" and as such the limit to the freedom of the self-positing subject (DFS 142). Nature has no qualities beyond simply being "opposed to that which posits itself" (DFS 142). However, there is no way in which this opposition can be bridged. For Hegel the I = I is presented as the absolute and therefore should be able to overcome the subject/object dualism. But Fichte's absolute cannot achieve the unity of subject and object (DFS 139). The subject is conditioned by nature, since all conscious agents are also objects and hence part of nature. This nature must be assumed to have some independence, without which it could not be a "not-I," "but its independence is nullified again, because it is only posited by reflection and its fundamental character is oppositeness" (DFS 139). Hegel describes this as "self-determination without consciousness." By this I understand him to mean that Fichtean self-determination cannot incorporate the subject's relatedness to and experience of objects since objects cannot be conceived other than as posits of the subject. Because the transcendental viewpoint (Fichtean self-consciousness) is unable to lay claim to appearance or the object world, the identity remains entirely in the subjective domain (DFS 117). The subject is therefore enclosed in itself, as the self-identical subject writ large. This criticism is very similar, as we will see in chapters 5 and 6, to poststructuralist criticisms of Hegel.

KANT'S SUBJECTIVISM AND THE PROMISE OF APPERCEPTION

The question Kant poses is: can the world be meaningful in the absence of human access to a way in which it is in itself or without God assigning some meaning to it? His response is that the basic conditions of meaningfulness have to rely on an active subject. The mind does not mirror nature but is active in the determination of its meaning. The categories of thought, which Kant argues provide structure to the experience of the world and which form the basis of all our judgments, are however described by Hegel as subjective and as isolating mind from world. The *Phenomenology's* account of self-consciousness corrects the subjectivism of the Kantian and Fichtean philosophical programs. Self-consciousness will show itself, in Hegel's hands, to be the necessary expression of the objective world. At the same time Hegel finds in Kant's transcendental unity of apperception the resources for reformulating Kant's own view of subjectivity such that it cannot be considered to be one-sided.

Kant's general concern is with the conditions that make experience possible, the basic condition of which was a knowing subject and a set of categories by which possible objects of experience could be thought. This subject has a basic reflective awareness that it is representing an object to itself. What is received through the senses is unified by an active subject. The active subject unifies the representations of an object such that they can be claimed to be mine. Kant's deduction of the categories of thought rested on the unifying function of apperception, a mental capacity that is able to think and hold together over time all one's representations. Without this unifying thinking subject, the representations would be nothing (CPR B131–32).

Hegel considers apperception to be one of Kant's great discoveries. It captures the essential nature of all consciousness as a striving to cognize the world. The content of experience, the manifold, is passively delivered to human cognition through the faculty of sensibility. It is apperception that is able to give unity to the manifold in consciousness by allowing the manifold to be cognized. This unifying function is something that cannot be

derived from the representations of objects themselves and must therefore be assumed to be the condition of any such representation, which is why apperception is described as transcendental. Hegel does however qualify his enthusiasm for apperception in his discussion of the critical philosophy in the *Encyclopedia Logic*. There he elaborates the criticism of Kant he made in his earlier Jena writings, that Kant's metaphysics is subjective. Kant is correct in presenting the transcendental unity of apperception such that it does not place the truth of the experience of objects in the immediate objects of experience. What allows objects of experience to be known is not their immediate sensed properties but discursive thought. Apperception's discursive contribution is intended to unify the subject/object divide, since the categories that are brought to bear on a possible object of experience are the only way in which objects can be known. However, Hegel argues that the transcendental character of apperceptive consciousness does not extend to the objects of experience in themselves; they remain purely in thought and consequently are subjective.

In contrast, Hegel argues that though the categories belong to "thinking as such, it does not follow at all from this that they should for that reason be *ours* alone, and not also be determinations of the objects themselves" (EnL §42z3). We can see thereby that Hegel's strategy is to grant objectivity to the content of experience, not just the categories that are brought to bear on that content: "It is the content on which everything depends, and this is equally subjective and objective" (EnL §42z3). Analysis of Kant in the *Encyclopedia Logic*, while written many years after the *Phenomenology*, illustrates why the notion of experience in that earlier work is centrally concerned to show the objectivity of the categories, and it also explains why the language of the absolute is so dominant in the *Phenomenology*. Whatever Hegel may mean by the absolute, it is clear that he is employing this term to demonstrate that his project is making a claim that overcomes the subjectivism of the critical philosophy. The following passage describing the limitation of Kantian apperceptive self-consciousness also indicates Hegel's strategy for correcting it: "it needs to be noted that it is not the subjective activity of self-consciousness that introduces absolute unity into the manifoldness. This identity is, rather, the absolute, the true itself" (EnL §42z1). My

concern here is to explain why he considers Kant's thought to be subjective. This will help set the scene for Hegel's attempt to reconceive self-consciousness, thought, and experience objectively.

Hegel claims that the Kantian categories, which are constitutive of human experience (the constitutive categories that enable and form the subjective experience of the world), are presented as simply belonging to us. The Kantian categories cannot be conceived as issuing from the object; they are restricted to phenomenal knowledge, which is the way in which objects are for us. The unity of the object is achieved by the subject combining representations of the object; these have their origin in sensible intuitions that provide the raw content of experience, while the categories have their origin in the mind. Those categories make the object unified and thinkable. Because the unity and cognizability of the object effectively issue only from a subjective domain of thinking, the thing-in-itself, in Hegel's view at least, remains thereby something wholly objective, a beyond to which one can have no access because its cognizable "objecthood" belongs only to thinking and not to the object.

Hegel contests the subjectivism that this view restricts us to: "[Kant's] philosophy is a *subjective idealism*, insofar as the *I* (the cognitive subject) supplies the form as well as the matter of knowing, the one qua thinking, the other qua sensing" (EnL §4223). The problem for Hegel is that Kant's approach to the categories cannot secure the objectivity of the categories because the thinking that determines these categories is circumscribed within the sphere of the subject. Kant's approach to the categories renders thought entirely subjective. The categories in this case could only be understood as "instruments" with which one attempts to comprehend objects but which remain absolutely distant from their objects. Thought in this case could only have its truth in an object that it is always (and necessarily unsuccessfully) trying to represent. In separating thought from the object, Kant renders its explanatory power entirely subjective. On the one hand, the object appears not to have any truth since its unity lies in the thought of it; and on the other hand, the categories cannot be true of a nondiscursive domain since they are posited as belonging entirely to human subjects. The *Phenomenology* demonstrates the inadequacy of thinking in these terms.

Hegel does, however, think Kant's approach can be salvaged. He does this in two ways. Firstly, by extending the insights of the transcendental unity of apperception;²² and secondly, by retaining a revised version of intuition. I will have recourse to speak about the second issue in some detail shortly, as this is important in understanding his view of subjectivity as well as many of his core notions. Hegel argues that Kant ignores the potential of the transcendental unity of apperception to connect subject and object. What Hegel sees as revolutionary in the transcendental unity of apperception is not that the categories are validated because they are grounded in the representing activity of the subject. Rather, apperception is "a higher principle in which it was possible to recognize a duality and therefore what is required for truth" (SL 524/GW12 27).²³

Hegel argues that apperception can be considered as going beyond a merely external relation of concepts to objects. Hegel reconceives apperception such that the categories are not "used" externally; they are not *applied* by consciousness to an intuited entity. In Hegel's account, the object is not separable from its conception. In apperception, properly conceived, the subject makes the object present to itself precisely because the truth of the object is *inseparable* from the thought of it. As he puts it in the *Science of Logic* in a very Fichtean formulation: "Thought sublates the *immediacy* with which [an object] first comes before us and in this way transforms it into a *positedness*; but this, its *positedness* is its *being-in-and-for-self* or its *objectivity*" (SL 516/GW12 18). Because an object's determinations are conceptual, it can express itself as objective, but only through its determinations *in* thought. Its objectivity is "none other than the nature of self-consciousness" (SL 516/GW12 19). This is not to say that the thing is determined by the conceptual whim of consciousness, but simply that there can be no other way in which the object can be considered to be, other than as thought.

Hegel builds on the self-positing subject of Fichte, Kant's transcendental unity of apperception, and Kantian autonomy in his reformulation of subjectivity. We can see why it is important for Hegel to overcome the subject/object dualism that Kant's and Fichte's thought left him. The way Hegel does this is by conceiving self-consciousness such that, rather than confronting an absolutely alien world, the subject can see itself in that alien

world. That is, Hegel reconceives self-consciousness so that rather than the object world standing over and against the conscious subject, the content of experience is not separable from the conditions and categories that allow the experience of objects. The model of experience and its centrality in the project of the *Phenomenology* are designed to show that knowing and experience are not restricted to the I. The truth of objects is the concept of them, and those concepts cannot be seen as being purely subjective or as having a transcendental or naturalistic origin. The discursivity of knowing and experience is disclosed through an extraordinarily complex process that is only completed when the entire *Phenomenology of Spirit* has unfolded.

THOUGHT AND EXPERIENCE

The early empiricist critique of metaphysics argued that the claims of metaphysics were unsubstantiated because they lacked an external content against which those claims could be measured. The empiricist response was to make experience the criterion of knowledge. Empiricism, Hegel argues in the early sections of the *Encyclopedia Logic*, attempted to provide the requisite content for knowledge by raising “the content belonging to perception, feeling and intuition to the form of universal representations” (EnL §38). Rather than a supersensible beyond serving as the basis for genuine knowledge, empiricism looked to the perceivable world. Reason is not abandoned, but its authenticating function shifts from thought to sensible experience, where it is able to establish the criteria for knowledge of the objects of experience. In empiricism the external world is the basis by which the truth of thinking and knowledge can be arbitrated.

Hegel claims, however, that the empiricist attempt to secure the objectivity of thought with the “firm foothold” of the sensible is unsuccessful. Escaping from the otherworldly claims of rationalism and premodern metaphysics, empiricism places the true firmly in the manifold of the here and now, that is, in the externality of matter. Hegel argues that empiricist explanations of the external world fail because the truth claims that are made about

the sensible world still present thought as *external* to the objects. The “sensory component is and remains a given . . . absolutely over and against me” (EnL §38z). The abstractions that empiricism appeals to—universals—are established only by isolating thought from the sensed object. The universals it employs to comprehend the object do not issue from the objects but from thought. For Hegel this reveals the more general point that the concepts, which are the basis of experiences and judgments, cannot be conceived as issuing from objects in themselves. The sensible world is judged by categories that issue from thought, not from objects. Experience in the particular way that empiricism intends this notion, as the immediate perception of an object, cannot be the arbiter of truth since the criteria by which reflective thought can make its judgments (universality, necessity, causality, and so on) have no necessary connection to the perceived object and these notions cannot be justified by appeal to the object. It is precisely this dilemma that leads Kant to attempt to overcome the opposition between empiricism and rationalism.

Despite Kant’s awareness of the conflicting claims of empiricism and rationalism, his thought is still prone to the core problem of empiricism—that there is some given way in which the world is that is made available through the senses. The categories are tied to the structure of human mindedness and must as such be distinguished from the sensible object. The categories are, as we have seen, therefore subjective. They cannot be considered as emanating from *the content of intuitions*. In Hegel’s Jena writings from before 1807 such as *Faith and Knowledge*, he expresses a deep dissatisfaction with the dualistic conception of concept and intuition in the critical philosophy. His remedy for this dualism, in those early works, is to eliminate the intuitive entirely. In the *Phenomenology* Hegel comes to realize that some sense of the intuitive needs to be preserved, though in a way that strips it of its purely receptive characteristic. While Hegel abhors all dualisms, he does not simply disband the concept/intuition distinction; he preserves the terms because he thinks this distinction is a useful way of capturing human experience and cognition. In the *Phenomenology* and the *Encyclopedia Philosophy of Mind*, he revives the notion of intuition. He does not transform all the sensory and perceptive apprehension of the world into something purely

conceptual. Such a move would have made the content of experience into something exclusively discursive and would have taken him too close to the subjectivism of Fichte's self-positing subject.

Hegel's distinctive move is to maintain a key aspect of Kantian intuition—the extraconceptual content of experience. He abandons the idea that intuition is an immediate reception of a given sensory content. As we have seen, it is the receptive character of intuition and the subjective character of the categories that create the unbridgeable distance between thought and the thing-in-itself.²⁴ Kant's immediate critics, such as Maimon, Hölderlin, Schelling, and Jacobi, all in their very different ways considered that Kant's epistemology, with its separate faculties of sensibility and understanding, could not produce a unified knowledge. Hegel, from his earliest writings, is clearly influenced by these criticisms. In the *Differenzschrift* this criticism is extended to Fichte. Fichte too was aware of the limits of Kant's approach to knowledge; he had tried to remedy the dualism by ignoring finite intuition. In his version of idealism, as we have seen, the I initiates thought; and by so doing, it establishes the concepts by which it reflects upon itself and the possible objects of experience. In his account of subjectivity, the I is both self-positing and limited by the not-I. The not-I, the sphere of others and things, is coassumed in the subject's positing of itself, since the positing of itself requires that it be able to distinguish itself from what is other to it. Hegel, however, argues that this not-I is a check on the subject that is completely other to it. It is something to which, as we have seen, the I reacts but which is an "unknown outside" (EnL §6022). The knowledge therefore that is created in the self's various acts of positing is wholly finite because this not-I stands over and against the subject in the same way as the Kantian thing-in-itself. Hegel obviously could not rest with Fichte's attempt to correct the subjectivism of Kant's thought, since it repeated the Kantian separation of mind and world. Fichte had claimed the I was an "absolute identity of subject and object" (EPW 323/SW2 442). Hegel contests this account, describing it as merely a "subjective Subject-Object" (DFS 157). Because reason is limited to what it alone posits, it is unable to make a bridge to the otherness of the not-I. An absolute has to be a unity of

subject and object. Fichte's thought does not therefore offer an absolute but rather only a subjective metaphysics.

Dieter Henrich argues that this early critique of Fichte is something that Hegel adopts from his school friend Hölderlin and is a pivotal moment in Hegel's intellectual development. Before Hegel became acquainted with this critique, his philosophical speculation was a naïve but orthodox Kantianism. Hölderlin's simple but penetrating thought shook him from this easy certainty. Hölderlin argues that any act of positing presupposes something more primordial: "the absolute as being, . . . that being which exists before all separation [*Urteil*]." ²⁵ There must be some deeper unity prior to our specific judgments and determination without which they would have no necessary relation to being at all. (This criticism is echoed in subsequent romantic criticisms of Fichte and Kant.) If we cannot assume such a prior unity, our thoughts and philosophical speculations might establish a conceptual coherence that is without any necessary relationship to being. ²⁶ Hegel's systematic thought does not keep this notion of a primordial unity; this is too robustly metaphysical for him. He does, however, take from Hölderlin the idea of a prereflective contact with the world. This contact captures in a very limited sense a unity of thought and being. The notion of experience that Hegel articulates in the *Phenomenology* brings to the fore the character of this unity. That unity does not assume that there is a given way in which being is that experience somehow uncovers. Experience, as the pathway that the natural consciousness undergoes, expresses the relation between thought and being. The relation of thought to being is, over the course of the *Phenomenology*, transformed such that being has to be conceived as self-determined and discursive. That does not mean, however, as I will show in the rest of this chapter, that the whole is a reality that could be made *transparent* to reason. That spirit must be regarded as self-determined does not necessitate that any putative unity of thought and being could be made into explicit forms of knowledge.

If we look to Hegel's explicit statements on experience, he says: "This *dialectical* movement is what consciousness exercises on itself as well as on its knowledge and object, and, *insofar as, to consciousness*, the new true object arises out of this movement, this *dialectical* movement is what is genuinely

called *experience* [*Erfahrung*]" (PhS §86/GW9 66). What is described here in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* is clearly not what is normally understood by experience. Experience in this context has both a technical meaning and is also the means by which the text systematically unfolds. Experience involves consciousness testing its knowledge of the object. This test is not of consciousness's knowledge of an object compared with an object independent of consciousness; rather, the consciousness provides *both* the standard by which the object is judged *and* the knowledge of the object.

This way of conceiving experience has to be understood in the context of Hegel's dissatisfaction with Kant's thing-in-itself and the empiricist's given. The account of experience Hegel describes in the *Phenomenology* does not involve the reception of a given sensory content, as with empiricism and intuition. Consciousness is characterized in the introduction as having two central qualities that allow experience to unfold: it distinguishes itself from the object and relates itself to it. The distinction between "what it declares to be the *in-itself*, that is, to be the *true*," and its knowing is something internal to consciousness itself (PhS §84/GW9 65). Consciousness compares its concept of an object with what it takes to be true. In this process a succession of judgments about itself and its objects evolves by its own hands from what it asserts within itself to be the standard of truth. The text propels itself forward by attempting to have its knowledge and object coincide. This alignment is not achieved until the last chapter, "Absolute Knowing," but even there the alignment of knowledge and object is not an identity.

How could such a method enable the text to progress? Given that the natural consciousness provides both the object as well as the standard by which the object is judged, then surely this is not really a comparison but simply an internal distinction posited by consciousness? Indeed, the comparison is internal to consciousness since the *Phenomenology* is not only an "examination of knowledge but also that *of the standard of knowledge*" (PhS §85/GW9 66). The central concern of the *Phenomenology* is to describe the way knowledge and the norms by which we experience and judge change. The text unfolds changes in the criterion of knowing. It offers a kind of discursive history of why it is that we come to know the world in the specific ways that we do. Experience is the means by which this history unfolds. It

both charts the way in which knowledge of an object is transformed and is the driver of that transformation. The mechanics of this can be described this way: consciousness establishes that the object it is attempting to make a knowledge claim for does not meet the criterion for what it considers to be the truth of the object, and consequently *both* object and its knowledge of the object are transformed. The object is not therefore considered as empiricism would conceive it, as a given external object, but is internal to consciousness itself: "The new object shows itself to have come about by means of a reversal of consciousness itself" (PhS §87/GW9 67). The claims to truth that consciousness proposes are progressively eroded by consciousness itself. This means that the object is altered by changes in the way consciousness conceives its own knowledge.

A progressively elaborate picture of the relation of consciousness to objects is constructed through the transformation and reversals that result from experience. These transformations of consciousness's way of knowing produce a new object and a new knowing "which presents itself to consciousness without consciousness knowing how that happens to it; it takes place for us, as it were, behind the back of consciousness." This movement of consciousness *beyond itself* progressively reveals the determinations of its knowing. The necessity of the transition of the "shapes of consciousness . . . guides the whole succession" (PhS §87/GW9 67–68). The mapping out of the succession of shapes of knowing builds an increasingly complex account of the concepts and patterns of judgments that frame conscious experience. One way of thinking of this project is as an attempt to describe what Wilfred Sellars describes as the "logical space of reasons."²⁷

The *Phenomenology* evolves by a process of self-examination and self-correction. What is dogmatically asserted as the true shows itself to be limited and is revised into a more adequate account of knowledge. The various shapes of knowing that are expressed as the text unfolds embody various truth claims that are constantly undermined, transformed, and sublated (*aufgehoben*). This activity is not, however, simply the domain of a singular consciousness making judgments about an external world. This process builds an increasingly comprehensive account of the ways in which consciousness understands itself, its knowing, its norms, and the objects of its

experience. The conscious subject understands itself within a network of conceptual relations that are reflected in its cognition. Consciousness per se, as well as more generally its relation to itself and its objects, is determined by this conceptual horizon that necessarily transcends the singularity of consciousness. The conditions of knowledge show themselves to be a set of relations that mediate its experience of itself and the world. These conditions will show themselves to be constitutive features of the reoriented self-consciousness that emerges in the final chapter of the *Phenomenology*.

The *Phenomenology* is a journey into this interpretative horizon. The pathway of doubt that the text's protagonist (the natural consciousness) travels down is described by Hegel as the science of the experience of consciousness. Kant, as we shall see in the next section, because of the way he articulated the division between consciousness and self-consciousness, presented the conditions for self-consciousness as unable to be experienced. In the *Phenomenology* consciousness experiences these conditions and in so doing makes them its own. Experience is, for Hegel, a process of self-appraisal or self-correction. Self-correction implies that what consciousness had asserted was in error; it is correction only to the extent that the limitations of previous claims to know are transformed into more adequate accounts of its knowing. Each shape of knowing or form of life—Hegel sometimes refers to them as “stations”—that is articulated as the text unfolds tries to fix the form of knowledge that it has determined. It tries to hold on to its truth, first as sense-certainty, then as perception, a supersensible reality, abstract reason, and so on. But these claims are always limited and inadequate. The various claims to know collapse and are pushed ahead by a suspicion that each description of consciousness's knowledge of the world is inadequate: “thought spoils its thoughtlessness, and its unrest disturbs that lethargy” (PhS §80/GW9 63). The suspicion or dissatisfaction with its own claims to know is its thinking or more precisely its rationality. I explore the implications of this view of rationality for self-consciousness in chapter 5.

At this point it may help to illustrate the way experience causes the transitions in the text by a brief examination of “Sense-Certainty,” the opening chapter of the *Phenomenology*. The opening claim of “Sense-Certainty” is that natural consciousness has immediate or receptive knowledge of sensory

objects. This claim assumes that there is a sensible domain of objects whose truth is given and to which intuitions give it direct access. It is a *preconceptual* sphere of truth. This claim fails because it is unable to capture in language the certainty with which it thinks it knows this immediate sensory domain. It initially attempts to capture the immediacy of the objects of its experience with the terms “this,” “here,” and “now.” However, the natural consciousness finds that the indexicals “this,” “here,” and “now” do not express these instances of experience, of which it thinks it has immediate intuitions. Even these basic terms miss their mark because they cannot describe the immediate objects other than as instances of universal concepts of “this,” “here,” and “now.” The truth claim of sense-certainty is based on the idea that objects can be immediately received by consciousness. The absence of conceptual mediation makes the receptivity of this sensory experience true. However, sense-experience cannot grant any epistemic status for this immediacy. Even the most minimal linguistic utterance that might serve to describe the claimed immediacy of the sensory experience is conceptually mediated. What is presented as immediate knowing cannot be a knowing, since any attempt to conceive immediate experience as something knowable is always a discursive mediation. The empirical cannot be considered as the sphere of genuine knowledge over and against the discursive. This does not mean, however, that we can simply claim that sensory experience is purely conceptual. The salient issue is that sense-experience is not simply receptive or passive; sensory experience involves basic discriminations that are judgmental and not simply receptive.

The progression of the *Phenomenology* is marked by consciousness increasingly coming to understand the object by virtue of its *involvement* with it and in turn seeing itself in that involvement. This is how Hegel describes experience in the preface: “And experience is exactly the name of this movement within which the immediate, the non-experienced, i.e., the abstract (whether the abstract is that of sensuous being or of ‘a simple’ which has only been thought about) alienates itself and then comes round to itself from out of this alienation. It is only at that point that, as a property of consciousness, the immediate is exhibited in its actuality and in its truth” (PhS §36/GW9 28). In thinking, the object in its immediacy is canceled;

nevertheless, it returns to itself in revised form, as the determinations of the object show themselves not as given, but as pervaded by thinking. The transformations of consciousness's understanding of the object are what Hegel understands by experience. This pathway discloses the determinations of objects and its own knowing, and these determinations, as will be discussed shortly, are the determinations of its self-consciousness.

THE *PHENOMENOLOGY'S* REORIENTATION OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

The notion of consciousness assumes that a subject is able to distinguish itself from the objects of its experience. Consciousness is conscious of something and, at least as far as the description of consciousness is concerned in the *Phenomenology*, it also involves a commitment to the idea that truth lies in an object domain over and against the subject. The *Phenomenology* progressively erodes such a view of truth, arguing that truth cannot be conceived as an object domain over and against consciousness. This is why the end of the *Phenomenology* can be said to fulfill the demand laid out in the preface, that the *Phenomenology* must unite science and self-consciousness. If the object remained as a truth domain other to thought, then the Logic couldn't guarantee that the determinate network of concepts it maps out wasn't purely subjective or "frictionless spinning in a void." This, as we have seen already, was the problem with Kant's thought. It had only a "subjective significance" because his "fear of the object" left thought "with the remains of a thing-in-itself, an infinite check, as a beyond" (SL 30/GW21 35).

In Hegel's case, thinking shows itself to permeate every relationship of humanity to itself and the world. Overcoming the alienation of subject from object is the very goal of the *Phenomenology*: "[consciousness] will reach a point where it sets aside its semblance of being burdened with what is alien to it, that is, the semblance of being burdened with what exists both merely for it and as an other" (PhS §89/GW9 68). The *Phenomenology* describes the education of consciousness "from his culturally immature standpoint up to

and into science” (PhS §28/GW9 22). This movement involves shapes of knowing undermining themselves and proceeding to increasingly adequate and complex accounts of what constitutes and allows consciousness’s cognitive relations. Putting it another way, the various shapes of consciousness offer a progressive disclosure of how each shape comes to know the world in the way that it does. But what I want to focus on for the remainder of the chapter is how the *Phenomenology*’s movement toward science involves a transformation of subjectivity.

One way of avoiding the apparent contradiction between what appears to be the competing claims of the *Science of Logic* made in its introduction—that it is both presuppositionless and that the *Phenomenology* is its presupposition—has been to see the *Phenomenology* as the necessary introduction to the *Logic*.²⁸ The *Phenomenology*, in this view, is required to demonstrate the importance and necessity of the *Logic*’s claim to self-determinacy, thereby ensuring its status as “objective, autonomous reason.”²⁹ Put simply, the *Phenomenology* negates itself absolutely and this negation is the result of its own immanent development.³⁰ The *Phenomenology* is therefore an argument that establishes the necessity for an antifoundational beginning. On this view, the *Logic*’s claim to be thought thinking itself must be able to assume that the thinking subject of the *Phenomenology* has been superseded in thought’s thinking of itself, because such a project requires giving up any subjective considerations.

Without wanting to delve into the historical quagmire of the precise relation of the *Phenomenology* to Hegel’s *Logic*, there is a way of understanding the *Phenomenology*’s final form of subjectivity, absolute knowing, such that the conceptual concerns of the *Logic* can be situated with regard to a reconfigured form of consciousness that is not canceled out in the move to the objectivity of the *Logic*.³¹ This subject is reconceived such that the categories of thought are seen as constitutive features of its self-consciousness. (The categories have to be understood in a much broader and historicized sense than merely as categories of a possible judgment.) The substantive point, in the context of this chapter, is that the reoriented subjectivity that emerges in absolute knowing is an entirely new way of conceiving subjectivity, one that, as we will see in subsequent chapters, makes problematic many of the claims of poststructuralism concerning Hegelian subjectivity.

The entire progression of the *Phenomenology* can be seen as an attempt to articulate the conditions that allow consciousness's cognitive relations to objects. These conditions, unlike Kant's categories of thought, are embedded in shapes of spirit, and are therefore more than just categories of a possible judgment. They are the product of the diverse elements that constitute a shape of spirit. The text progressively discloses the conditions that define the ways in which consciousness understands itself and the world. By the end of the work the conditions that consciousness takes to be the determinations of the object are recognized as the totality of conditions *of its own* cognitive relations and experience.³² The experience that the natural consciousness goes through along its journey in the *Phenomenology*, culminating in absolute knowing, is a process in which the conscious subject comes to understand itself in terms of these conditions. These conditions provide it with the content of a new form of consciousness, and, most importantly, it understands those conditions to be self-determined. Self-determined, in this context, means that these conditions of self-consciousness and experience are the *collective* products of human sense-making practices.³³ Conceiving of itself in terms of these objective conditions for knowledge, which supersede the singularity of the self (since these conditions are the product of a myriad of cultural, historical, and social forces) and yet are the conditions for consciousness, will require the conscious subject to consider itself as essentially self-transcending. I want now to briefly examine the idea of the subject as self-transcending.

The *Phenomenology* has a simple goal: to think the relation of consciousness to the object of experience. Initially consciousness, as sense-certainty, presents its relationship to the object as if it does not have to *think* its relation to the object, but can, in the manner of Jacobi, simply intuit the world to which it relates directly, unencumbered by the conceptual relations mapped out by Kant, which seemed to have separated consciousness from the world. The model of self-relation that sense-certainty assumes is an immediate identity of subject and object. The text moves from an initial conception of consciousness as certain of its truth in an external object along a pathway of despair that at every point undermines this certainty. As the text unfolds and discloses the "criteria of what knowing is" that

corresponds to each shape of knowing, it articulates the network of conditions, concepts, and norms that mediate our relation to the world and ourselves. The *Phenomenology* proceeds through the self-examination of its protagonist, the natural consciousness. The natural consciousness makes various claims about the nature of its knowing, for example, that it knows objects immediately or that it has knowledge of a universal communicable essence of objects. As each claim collapses, the basis of the next claim emerges. The progression of these various “shapes of knowing” unfolds the work in its entirety. As has already been discussed in the account of experience above, the progressive disclosure of these shapes of knowing is the consequence of the natural consciousness examining its knowledge claims (from sense-certainty to religion). Through this self-examination, it gradually discloses the complex conditions that allow its cognitive relations to objects. These conditions—norms, categories, and concepts—define the ways in which consciousness understands itself and the world.

At this point, however, we need to distinguish Hegel’s analysis from Kant’s account of apperceptive self-consciousness. The way Hegel conceives the relation between the conditions for knowing and the conception of self-consciousness that emerges in the *Phenomenology* is developed to correct deficiencies in Kantian apperceptive self-consciousness. In Hegel’s reading, Kant’s formulation of apperception presents a dichotomy between consciousness and self-consciousness. Self-consciousness represents the matrix of conditions that allows a conscious subject to be aware of itself, self-identical, and capable of making judgments about objects. Hegel saw apperceptive self-consciousness as essentially contentless, an abstraction that is essential to and yet opposed to consciousness.³⁴ Apperceptive self-consciousness is the form that gives unity to one’s representations. It is the discursivity that is employed to make sense of the world and to provide unity to experience. Apperceptive self-consciousness generates the concepts and categories and the complex inferential relations between these elements that allow objects to be thought. The problem, however, is that the content of experience is completely other to this discursive field. The empirical content belongs to consciousness. In a sense this division between apperceptive self-consciousness and consciousness mirrors the division between concept and intuition.

In absolute knowing, Hegel tries to reconcile this dichotomy. There the conscious subject comes to understand itself in terms of these cognitive conditions, which provide it with the content of a new form of consciousness. At the end of the *Phenomenology*, those conditions come to be understood not as conditions determining an external object, but as the conditions of its own cognitive relations and experience.³⁵ And importantly, the subject sees these conditions as the products of spirit. It recognizes the complex social and historical developments that have determined why it is that it understands the world in the way that it does. And it recognizes the *necessity* that this understanding could not be otherwise. Consequently there is no content or thing-in-itself over and against the subject that is other to its own thought.

Initially the movement of the *Phenomenology* in its opening chapters is characterized by a comparison of knowledge and object. The knowledge claims of the natural consciousness are restricted to the accuracy of consciousness's conceptions of external objects. In the third chapter, the limitations of such a representational epistemology begin to become apparent. In absolute knowing, the conscious subject recognizes that it cannot make a rigid distinction between itself and the objects of its experience. The conditions or conceptuality that mediate the subject's relations to objects, and hence the objects themselves, are no longer seen as something other, precisely because in the concluding chapter of the *Phenomenology* the conscious subject understands itself in terms of these conditions. Moreover, it recognizes also that these cognitive conditions are the only way in which the objects of experience can be known.

What the natural consciousness has been doing throughout its journey is taking its self-consciousness as its object, in the first instance unconsciously, but in absolute knowing these conditions, which constitute its self-consciousness, are recognized both as the condition of its self-consciousness and as the only way in which the objective world can be for it. This is how Hegel describes this movement: "because to a greater degree it immediately takes itself to be real knowledge, this path has a negative significance for it, and in its eyes the realization of the Concept will count to an even greater degree as the loss of itself, for it is on this path that it loses its truth"

(PhS §78/GW9 61). As these various claims to truth collapse, it loses itself since these claims to know also represent the progressive erosion of its self-understanding. There is, however, a further sense in which the pathway of the *Phenomenology* is a “loss of itself.” The loss of its various claims to truth is also a progressive revision of the subject such that it understands itself in terms of the patterns of relations that make up those complex conditions of knowing. This in effect changes its self-understanding to one that is essentially self-transcending. There is a shift in the cognitive relation from the opening of the *Phenomenology*, which is largely that of a subject over and against an external world, to the relation of self to conceptuality, sociality, religion, and history. The pathway of the text traces the values, conditions, concepts, and norms that frame our judgmental relations and that constitute our awareness of self and world.

In the end, consciousness is no longer opposed to self-consciousness because it is divested of the scourge of representationalism; it no longer sees the empirical or the external as that which its knowing must legitimate. To make oneself at home with what is other to thought is an impossible task for self-consciousness. In absolute knowing, consciousness does not see the object of its experiences as other, and this is the moment in which self-consciousness is united with consciousness. What consciousness intuits in its experience (which it makes explicit through the complex progression of the text) is its self-consciousness. Hegel rejected the abstractness and formality of the division between a self-identical subjective sphere and a consciousness that experiences the external world. Kant’s and Fichte’s formulation of self-consciousness had abstractly opposed consciousness and self-consciousness.³⁶ Consciousness is tied to the sphere of external objects, while self-consciousness is either the self-positing self-identical subject (Fichte) or a form of self-relation that must accompany all one’s representations such that they can be said to be mine (Kant).

Hegel clearly agrees with Kant that self-consciousness fundamentally involves categories that it brings to bear on experience. The broad issue is that knowledge and experience depend, for Kant, on conditions; but for Hegel, Kant’s “categories” belong only to us and not to the world. The self-identical subject, which we saw in the discussion of Fichte, and Kant’s

apperceptive subject are criticized by Hegel for their subjectivism. The I = I, a subject that strives toward a self-identity in otherness, is rejected by Hegel. Hegel does not abandon consciousness (the sphere romanticism takes to be so important) as a central component of human experience. Nevertheless, he reconceives consciousness (which is in the world with objects) such that it cannot be abstractly opposed to self-determining spirit. Consciousness is not implicitly, as with Hölderlin, connected to a primordial ground of being in some mysterious way. Hegel had to conceive the whole as self-determining and as in a minimal sense thoroughly discursive; otherwise his thought would have revived the concept/intuition dualism. It is important, therefore, that the conditions of self-consciousness must therefore pertain to consciousness (that is, the subjective experience of the world) and not to an abstract self-identical I, which is other to the world of experience. As we will see in the final section of this chapter, those conditions of self-consciousness, which we can think of broadly as the space of reasons, are unable to be understood as a fixed reality or set of conditions that could be made *transparent to reason*. In the next section, and in chapters 5 and 6, I argue the dynamism of self-producing spirit could not be made available to reason in this way.

In a phrase that summarizes the nature of the movement of the *Phenomenology* and the effect of this on the self-understanding of the natural consciousness, Hegel says: spirit's "necessity" is to "*enrich the participation self-consciousness has in consciousness*" (PhS §801/GW9 525, my emphasis). The transformation of each shape of knowing into the succeeding one involves an increased awareness of the broader domain that structures possible experience and knowledge. The conscious subject can only understand itself within a system of conceptual relations, which are the product of a myriad of determinate forces, and which also reflect its cognitive relations. It is these sexual, social, historical, religious, and linguistic conditions that transcend the conscious subject but that are the condition for its very subjectivity that Hegel, in the *Phenomenology*, tries at great length to explain. These objective conditions for knowledge transcend the singularity of the self and yet are the conditions for consciousness. The further the natural consciousness proceeds along its quest to know, the more it expresses the

intricacies of its determinate relations, and the more its self-consciousness reflects those determinations. Another way of describing this is that the progression of the *Phenomenology* is a process of realizing that the being-for-self of the natural consciousness is not exclusive.

The *Phenomenology* demonstrates that the determinate relation to otherness cannot be comprehended as conceptuality *imposing* itself on either the conscious subject or the objects of the conscious subject's experience. Nevertheless, the relation of consciousness to otherness is essentially conceptual. What is being suggested here is that while consciousness engages with the world as something separate from it, the world it experiences is not ontologically distinct from the conceptual conditions of its experience and cognition. In absolute knowing, the natural consciousness recognizes that its knowing and experience are conceptually mediated. It also recognizes that the objects of its experience cannot be considered other than in conceptual terms—there is no “real” object behind the conceptually mediated experience of the object. This overcoming of the subject/object distinction enables consciousness to stop looking for truth in something other to it, as is the case in representationalism, a form of knowing that characterizes the early chapters of the *Phenomenology*. Representationalism cannot justify its own way of knowing; it cannot be self-determined or self-satisfying precisely because that on which it reflects to find truth is external to it.

The *Phenomenology*'s transformation of knowing is such that it can no longer be understood as that of a singular subject who makes judgments about objects as wholly something other. The objective conditions for knowledge, which consciousness had previously taken to be other to it, are now understood to be constitutive features of its self-consciousness and are capable of being experienced. Those conditions are not just the instrument through which the world is accessed. Thought, in this sense, is not subjective. Its concepts are not of a self-contained human mindedness but are necessarily of the world. Moreover, experience and knowledge have to be understood as self-determined, that is, determined by the conceptual matrix that is the interplay of language, history, and community. The truth of the object does not have to be justified by an appeal to something other to thought such as the thing-in-itself or God or a primordial ground of being.

The important change this effects in consciousness is that its engagement with the world is bound to and limited by the complex matrix of conditions that make up its thought.

It is worth pointing out here that because these conditions are historical and self-determined they are of necessity in a state of transformation, especially in modernity. There is therefore an instability at their heart, and this is reflected in the way Hegel conceives reason itself, as we will see in chapter 5. This instability is also in the very character of subjectivity itself. Because these constantly transforming conditions of self-consciousness are the very essence of Hegel's subject, subjectivity itself cannot be fixed and self-identical. The self-correction and self-determination that is distinctive of the norms and the categories of thought, about which we will say something more in the next section, make Hegel's subject unstable.

SPIRIT, SELF-DETERMINATION, AND SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Hegel's "Idea," in which the *Science of Logic* culminates, claims to be "the unity of concept and reality" (SL 672/GW12 175). Interpreting what Hegel means by this has demarcated the history of Hegel interpretation. It has usually been taken as a robustly metaphysical doctrine, as we saw in the passage from Taylor quoted at the start of the chapter. This unity is produced, on this strongly metaphysical view, by the implicit rational structure of spirit, which is a kind of immanent divine intelligence, progressively unfolding itself over time. Hegel's *Logic* on this view maps the logical character of this divine rationality, which humans by virtue of their rationality can equate with their own abstract thought. The *Phenomenology* represents thereby a pathway that one leaves behind once one lands in this logical sphere of truth.

In contrast to this view, I have argued above that Hegel's notions of experience and self-consciousness try to capture the character of our contact with the world in a manner that does not insuperably divide thought

and object. There is nothing external to our judgments and truth claims that can serve as independent grounds of legitimation. That is, whatever Hegel may mean by the unity of thought and being, it cannot assume that there is a given external world or fixed realm of truth that thought has access to independent of its own discursive limits. As I have already said, Hegel's primary Kantian assumption is that reason is unable to appeal to a transcendent set of norms or an empirical object; consequently, it must be regarded as reflectively establishing the norms for its own operations by virtue of its capacity for self-correction.³⁷ The narrative of the *Phenomenology* illustrates the pathway of self-correction by which the norms and categories that structure experience and knowledge of the world progressively change. Besides depicting changes in human self-understanding and cognition, the text also theorizes the way in which changes in self-understanding and cognition take place.

What we have seen so far is in part how we ought not to think of the way these changes take place: namely, reason's capacity for self-correction cannot be grounded in an essential nature or immediacy. Something non-discursive or transcendent cannot be the legitimate basis for judgment. Hegel's positive project takes its cue, as we have seen, from Kant: reason is self-grounding. In Hegel's hands this comes to mean that norms are binding and authoritative because they are based in structures of intersubjective recognition. This intersubjective grounding of norms is rational and objective largely because of the way Hegel reconfigures Kantian autonomy. Rather than focusing on an individual who has the gift of objective disembodied rational thought who subjects herself to a law as if she were its author, Hegel's focus is on the social and historical transformation of the reasons one gives for an action or judgment. We can only act as if we are rationally law governed because of the communal, historical, and inter-cognitive ties binding individuals together. The reasons that we give for our actions and judgments, as well as the concepts and norms that frame all experience and cognition, have to be understood as collectively determined. Hegel's claim that spirit is self-producing is not the story of a given rational structure unfolding itself over time.³⁸ The notion of self-producing spirit is intended to capture a complex form of collective human self-determination.

It describes the evolution of the intersubjectively derived conditions that form the basis of judgment and experience. But it is also meant to capture the complex ways in which the recognitive interplay of social, political, and historical forces (the intersubjectively derived conditions of knowledge and experience) come to be authoritative and binding.

Hegel's claim therefore as to the unity of thought and being cannot be a return to a precritical metaphysics or a monistic-spirit. These are implausible interpretations because of his acceptance of the key principles of Kant's critical project. Terry Pinkard has argued that a better way to understand the Concept, an immensely complex term that Hegel uses to capture why things are conceived the way they are, is as a claim concerning the objectivity of judgments. Judgments are objective not because of a correspondence between object and judgment, but because of the "way in which the *judgment* about the object is located within a pattern of reasoning that is not itself determined by the object but by the way in which spirit, *Geist*, has socially and historically come to determine itself as necessarily taking the object."³⁹ In the *Science of Logic* Hegel claims that the "objectivity or the concept is itself none other than the nature of self-consciousness" (SL 516/GW12 19). What Hegel is referring to by self-consciousness is the expanded sense of apperception that I have referred to previously, which overcomes the subjectivism of Kant's and Fichte's thought, which is also why he equates it with objectivity and the Concept. In the *Phenomenology* self-consciousness is expressed as the self-understanding achieved in absolute knowing, in which consciousness is unable to separate the world from the conditions through which it has self-consciousness, that is, the conditions by which it experiences the world. Because the determinations of thinking are tied to the determinations of self-consciousness, there can be no given to which any cognition could appeal to legitimize its knowledge claims.

Self-consciousness is constrained by the objective conditions of experience, conditions that are not just a medium through which we access the world but are, as we have seen, *inseparable* from our experience of the world. The patterns of inference that constitute our experiential judgments are described as necessary, because one commitment implies other logical or "judgmental commitments."⁴⁰ Exactly how the categories are forged that

make this inferential whole is a complex and highly contentious subject. Two comments are worth making about them: firstly, regardless of how these categories emerge as conditions of experience, there is, as we have seen, a constant appraisal of them. The experiential movement of the *Phenomenology* is the living expression of this, since its concern is to show why certain ways of knowing are inadequate or no longer binding on us. Secondly, these inferential relations are not simply a pattern of abstracted logical relations or universals operating in a platonic third realm but are expressions of shapes of spirit.

The *Phenomenology* establishes the conceptually determined character of knowing. Any judgment shows itself to be connected implicitly to an associated network of judgments in which concepts are linked inferentially and necessarily. The *Phenomenology* demonstrates the necessity for understanding knowledge, thought, and experience holistically. The Logic charts these concepts, but these cannot be understood as a type of “third realm” divorced from our active engagement with the world as singular conscious subjects. Hegel’s concern in the *Phenomenology* is to demonstrate that cognition and experience cannot be isolated from concepts in this way. As we have seen, the various knowledge claims held throughout the text are not presented as elaborate propositions that capture the truth of the objective world; they are described variously as “shapes of spirit” and “forms of knowing.” A central purpose, therefore, of the *Phenomenology* is to show that there cannot be any clear distinction between thought, subject, history, culture, and logic.

Hegel’s claims concerning the objectivity of the Logic, as with self-consciousness in the *Phenomenology*, need to be framed against the background of his dissatisfaction with the subjectivism of Kant’s thought. Kant argued that the content of experience had to be delivered by the faculty of sensibility, which immediately connects the subject with the empirical world. Hegel’s Concept by contrast unifies form and content; accordingly, there is no intuitive understanding distinguishable from knowing and experience as such. There is no intuition of the immediate or the singular. Human knowledge is always mediated by a “prior orientation” to the whole, and that orientation is not receptive but spontaneous. Moreover, intuition, for Hegel, is not the passive reception of an empirical domain other to thinking.

Intuitions must carry as content the basic unity of thought and being, otherwise we would land in the concept/intuition dualism that is to be avoided. The Idea, the final category of Hegel's Logic, which lays claim to the unity of concept and reality, must be considered as genuinely expressing the whole, that is, the unity of thought and being that Hölderlin said must orient our judgments.

This movement reflects the methodology of the *Phenomenology*, where the natural consciousness establishes both the standard for the way we are to judge the objects of experience and the object judged; these standards are bound to the determinations of self-consciousness. But this story, like the *Phenomenology*, can only unfold if that standard is constantly self-corrected, that is, if reason can be shown to correct itself. Reason's self-correcting urge results from tensions that emerge in identifying with or distancing ourselves from various norms, with the collapse of a way of life, when concepts, values, and norms lose their normative force. This self-correction is only possible because Hegel preserves a sense of intuition, which allows a connection with the background whole (Hegel's version of Hölderlin's primordial unity) in which all our norms are determined (the space of reasons broadly interpreted). It is a sense of the whole in which thought is situated and which troubles thought sufficiently that makes it want to give a better account of itself, and that is not, contrary to Pinkard and Brandom, identical to the reflective practices of giving and asking for reasons.⁴¹ Thought is unsettled precisely because it is oriented by more than what it can, at any given point in time, *explicitly* affirm to be a determination of itself. This does not mean that these elements of thought are given, but simply that it does not have a transparent conception of all the moments that are constitutive of it. We are finite agents, but thought is not; it is imbued with levels of implicit and explicit determinations.

The shapes of life described in the *Phenomenology* and in the succession of categories described in the Logic all develop contradictions and tensions that seem, from the particular point of view articulated, irresolvable. The collapse and transition (sublation) that ensue occur at the hands of reason and the Concept itself. As the various claims break down, they reveal a more coherent understanding of the whole, which reason as the progenitor of

that collapse alludes to, because it has an intuition of something more than what is presented in the specific concepts articulated. Thought is more than our collective decisions, authorized sense-making practices, and interrecognitive relations and commitments. Reason is not a faculty but is a mode of thought that has some sense of the inadequacy of the various positions because it has an intuition of the whole, which is why Hegel equates reason with the Idea. Our thinking and experience are infused with “norms” that are not explicit, which are not legitimated, but which are determinations. Reason’s struggle to satisfy itself is to make those “norms” explicit.

At the end of the *Phenomenology*, the natural consciousness and the “we” (the philosophical observers who have witnessed the inquiry) see themselves and the whole as self-determining. The whole is not as Derrida and Deleuze take it to be—a self-determining spirit understood on the model of Kantian autonomy, that is, a self-determined whole that could be transparent to reason. Hegel does think the whole has to be seen as self-determined, but as I have attempted to show in this chapter, that is the necessary consequence of the way in which he responds to the concept/intuition dualism. If he did not conceive the whole as self-determined, and as fundamentally discursive, his approach would fall back into a mind/world dualism. But that does not mean he has created an expanded self-identical subject, whose exclusive relation to itself is self-knowledge. He was sufficiently sympathetic to the romantic critique of Kant and Fichte to disallow this approach as the means by which to establish the unity of mind and world. As we will see in the final two chapters, it is the failure of Deleuze and Derrida to recognize the way in which Hegel responds to the concept/intuition dualism that allows them to see him as the philosopher of presence.

4

HEIDEGGER, CARE, AND SELFHOOD

A CORE CHALLENGE for Kant and German idealism is to reconcile the self-determining subject with the modern world. Descartes's subject is positioned against a causal natural world, as well as against the irrationality of a social, political, and religious orthodoxy that had assumed their order was the given structure of reality. Descartes's autonomous subject is thereby alienated from nature and the social world. Fichte and above all Hegel attempt to demonstrate that under the conditions of modernity, the social and political order could be considered as having transformed itself such that an autonomous self-determining subject could be at home in it.¹ Even German romanticism, despite its questioning of the hegemony of reason, still holds on to the idea of overcoming alienation by reestablishing coherence, integrity, and wholeness.²

Throughout *Being and Time* there is a constant refrain that Dasein's self has been abandoned, dissolved, lost, dispersed, or closed off from itself.³ This language, as well as a host of other terms that Heidegger uses to describe inauthenticity, such as falling and alienation, appears to set the scene for an authentic self that, just as with his nineteenth-century forebears, could reclaim integrity and coherence back from its alienation and corruption. In Heidegger's case, overcoming the deficient conformist sociality of *das Man* would seem to be the most likely candidate for restoring a lost unity.⁴ Authenticity

would then, on this view, present a model of radical individualism, a true-self set over and against an inauthentic subject. While it is clear that Heidegger is critical of a deficient model of subjectivity, it is not the inauthenticity of Dasein's *Man*-self that he is seeking to decontaminate in order to reclaim a self that is purified of its conformism.⁵ It is the modern self-determining subject against which he directs his critique of the subject. Inauthenticity, authenticity, and above all care are concepts he develops to contest this model of subjectivity. Whatever challenge Dasein offers to modern philosophy, it is certainly not achieved by reviving the model of a stable and unified or spontaneous subject. The idea of a subject constructing itself, the world's meaningfulness, or the meaning of being through acts of positing or spontaneity is exactly what is being contested in *Being and Time* and many of his later works.

Heidegger challenges the modern self-determining and spontaneous subject on two related fronts: firstly, through the primordially of the care structure; and secondly with the divided model of selfhood presented in his discussion of conscience. Care is central to Heidegger's project in *Being and Time*, but it is an extremely difficult term to define. At this stage, all that can be said about care is that it is the condition for anything mattering, that it structures our involvement with the world and it provides the basis by which the world can be said to be in any sense intelligible. It is the term he employs to capture what it means to be Dasein. There are two aspects to the care structure's challenge to the modern subject: firstly, at the descriptive level the care structure presents the necessity of our involvement with the world; our fundamental engagement with the world is a given and it is not something that one could detach oneself from in order to achieve a genuine knowledge of the world.⁶ Secondly, and this is the primary concern of this chapter, the care structure, despite its comprehensiveness, cannot be understood as a product of a collective human endeavor. Care is the basis of meaningfulness, not of an authorizing subject. The consequence of this is that the individual subject cannot be conceived as self-determined or spontaneous, since both of these concepts place the subject as a determinative center of meaning and authority. This leaves us, however, with the question of how we are then to consider the subject if it cannot be conceived as spontaneous, self-determining, or self-positing.

For the most part Heidegger refrains from using terms like “subject” or “human being,” precisely because these terms are usually conceived on the model of a worldless subject over and against an object. He employs terms such as “being-there” (*Dasein*), “being-in-the-world,” and a host of other terms, including “care,” to describe the subject of his investigation. These terms, rather than “human nature,” “subjectivity,” or “self-consciousness,” disclose the structure of *Dasein* in a manner that is far more appropriate to the character of human existence. Nevertheless, when Heidegger describes *Dasein*’s self-relation, for the most part he uses “self.” It is in the examination of conscience that this is dealt with in most detail.

Conscience describes two distinct aspects of *Dasein*: firstly, the uncanniness of “thrown individuation.” In conscience, uncanniness calls to *Dasein*, allowing it to recognize that it is thrown into a world and is not at home, and that this is yet the only world that *Dasein* inhabits. The second feature that conscience shows to be essential to the self is its *Man*-self (that aspect of selfhood that embodies the anonymous interpretative parameters of *das Man*). Both of these terms are discussed prior to the explicit discussion of conscience in sections 55–59, but it is in the latter—specifically in the notion of guilt—that these two forms of self-relation are shown to be essential features of selfhood. They are not reconciled in conscience and guilt. *Dasein* has to maintain its selfhood despite the fundamental opposition of these two notions. This sets the self at issue in *Being and Time* against idealist conceptions of subjectivity, because the fundamentally divided character of Heidegger’s self is unable to achieve the type of coherence and identification with the whole that, for example, Hegelian self-consciousness takes to be possible.

DAS MAN AND INAUTHENTICITY

Discourse, disposition (*Befindlichkeit*),⁷ and understanding are the three equiprimordial existential structures of *Dasein*. This discursive architecture is the basis by which anything is intelligible to *Dasein*. They constitute the formal schema of signification. However, this formal structure of

intelligibility does not provide the interpretative context through which the world actually has meaning. That instead issues from *das Man*, which prescribes the “average intelligibility” that for the most part frames Dasein’s relation to the world. While discourse, disposition, and understanding represent the formal structure of signification, *das Man* “articulates *the referential context* [*den Verweisungszusammenhang*] of significance” of this everyday world (BT 129, my emphasis). It is clear from this passage that *das Man* provides what might be described as the normative content (the concrete sociohistorical norms, customs, and affections) that make up the particular world Dasein inhabits, without which the existential structures referred to above (discourse, disposition, and understanding) would be wholly abstract.

Das Man prescribes the conventions, norms, and culture that allow Dasein to function in its culture: how one uses things, what one does in public, how one speaks, how one treats others, and so on. The world of *das Man* is the world we have in common with others.⁸ It represents the everyday understanding, which lays out in advance how things are to be interpreted. *Das Man* provides the interpretative parameters by which Dasein makes sense of its world and with which things can matter to it. *Das Man* structures and prefigures the possible ways in which Dasein can think about itself and the world.⁹ These are what might be very loosely described as the reasons that we share for doing certain things: collective dispositions toward the world, habits, affects, and so on, which have their origin in culture and history. *Das Man* is meant to capture the particular ways in which things matter to us. These are not reasons in the sense of the space of reasons, that is, rational principles established through a deliberative context in which there is rational give and take, as well as correction.

Heidegger characterizes the relation of Dasein to *das Man* as being under its dominion (*Botmässigkeit*). The various ways others dominate Dasein are discussed at length in well-known sections of *Being and Time*: idle talk, curiosity, and ambiguity. These modes characterize the “everyday” ways in which Dasein engages with the world. Heidegger claims that these ways of Dasein’s being-with-others are not pejorative; they are just inauthentic modes in which Dasein is in the world.¹⁰ The inauthentic modes of Dasein (averageness, distantiality, and so on) are where Dasein most often resides.¹¹

These inauthentic ways in which Dasein is with others—*Mitsein*—are distinguished by a failure of “self-constancy,”¹² literally, a “failure to stand by oneself [*Unselbstständigkeit*]” (BT 128).

Despite *das Man* providing the “referential context” for Dasein’s desires and values, Heidegger describes the relation of Dasein to *das Man* as having “fallen away from itself as an authentic potentiality for Being its Self, and has fallen into the ‘world’” (BT 175). Falling “away from itself” suggests the existence of a radical subjectivity or a prelapsarian self that is wholly other to *das Man* that could be reclaimed. Dasein is consistently said to be lost in *das Man*, to be absolved of being itself, to be “abandoned to the disposal of *das Man*” (BT 193), to have abdicated responsibility to *das Man*, and so on. These descriptions give the impression that authentic being for self is achievable by freeing Dasein of its *Man*-self. However, these terms (abandoned, absolved, and so on) and the language of falling do not indicate the covering over of an authentic subjectivity that Dasein could reclaim and with which it could then confront the everyday world that it inhabits inauthentically.

Heidegger describes the aspect of Dasein that is under the dominion of *das Man* as its *Man*-self, this is, the anonymous self.¹³ This *Man*-self captures the manifold ways in which Dasein is absorbed in its everyday world. The self for the most part exists as this *Man*-self. While much of the description of the *Man*-self is certainly imbued with Heidegger’s disdain for modernity, he is, as I have already said, emphatic that this way of existing is a legitimate expression of Dasein. Authentic Dasein does not describe a substantive subject that is separable from the world. The self, in both its authenticity and its inauthenticity, is of a very different order from the Cartesian subject. Care, as will be discussed below, is the overarching concept by which Dasein’s selfhood must be understood, and this elemental structure is not a substance, a self-thing, or something present-at-hand (BT 321–22). Nevertheless, authenticity is a distinct attribute of Dasein. It is an alternative self-understanding that runs through being-for-death, conscience, and resoluteness. What such an alternative self-understanding could be, given that *das Man* provides Dasein’s referential context, is something that I will discuss shortly.

Heidegger's derisive sociological comments about *das Man* detract from its normative function, but they also detract from his consistent anti-Cartesianism and his critique of the spontaneous subject. His analysis of Dasein systematically undermines these views of subjectivity and offers a comprehensive alternative to them. The discussion of authenticity and much of division 2 explore forms of Dasein's self-relation that are not "dispersed [*zerstreut*]" into *das Man* (BT 129).¹⁴ The authentic self is not "found" simply by Dasein withdrawing from *das Man* or by retreating into a transcendental ego. Heidegger describes being lost in the average everydayness of *das Man* as a type of self-forgetting, but by this he means only that there are ways in which Dasein can be other than as its *Man*-self. There is no primordial transcendental ego that meets with others and subsequently forms a socialized *Man*-self. Dasein's *Man*-self is the form of selfhood that expresses the normative context of *das Man*; it does not mask an essential subjectivity. The way in which he describes Dasein's relation to *das Man* ultimately is expressed as part of Dasein's care structure. This does, however, raise the problem of how to make sense of anxiety and authenticity, which at first sight appear to present Dasein in its authenticity as an isolated subject.

ANXIETY, INDIVIDUATION, AND AUTHENTICITY

Heidegger says anxiety "individuates [*vereinzelt*] Dasein and discloses it as '*solus ipse*'" (BT 188).¹⁵ This way of describing Dasein appears to infer that there is an isolatable subjectivity in which authentic Dasein can take cover from *das Man* and that is Dasein's real home. However, the individuation that anxiety causes does not establish a new coherent and integrated self-relation that is a counter to *das Man* or the Cartesian and idealist subject. Subjectivity from Descartes onward is the center to which all representations are related. By contrast, individuated Dasein has no presence of the self or self-identity; it has none of the substantiveness that characterizes the Cartesian self.¹⁶ Heidegger describes individuation and uncanniness as a primordial not-being-at-home: "From an existential ontological point of

view, the not-at-home [*Un-zuhause*] must be conceived as the more primordial phenomenon" (BT 189).¹⁷ The not-at-home and individuated Dasein does not establish a new isolated subject.¹⁸ Anxiety, conscience, and death present a subject that is not at the center of meaning determination. It does, however, disclose a form of self-relation that Dasein is unable to get from *das Man*. This means that Dasein's selfhood is not simply identical with its *Man*-self.

In the systemic breakdown that anxiety induces, Dasein retreats from *das Man*, allowing it to be "disclosable [*erschließbar*] to itself in a primordial sense" (BT 190). Anxiety fractures the comprehensiveness of Dasein's inauthentic self-understanding. The fragility of that self-understanding shows itself most famously in facing death. In the confrontation with death, a radically individuated Dasein presents itself. This is prefigured in this earlier discussion of anxiety where "the world has the character of completely lacking significance" (BT 186). Anxiety marks the inability of "the context of signification" that *das Man* articulates to lay an exclusive claim on Dasein. In anxiety, the interpretative and normative parameters issuing from *das Man* (average everydayness) are no longer unquestioningly fallen in line with. Anxiety thereby makes Dasein not at home in the general patterns of habits, affects, and norms that *das Man* prescribes for the public way in which things are to be interpreted (BT 187).

The distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity, as well as how one might conceive of the individuating effects of anxiety, is nicely illustrated by Thomas King in his Massey lectures from 2003, *The Truth About Stories*.¹⁹ King's complex and compelling analysis of race makes a critical distinction between Indians and *the* Indian of imagination, that is, the Indian that could be recognized as Indian: "We dressed as *the* 'Indian' dressed. . . . I have my own box of photographs. Pictures of me in my Indian outfits, pictures of me *being* 'Indian.' . . . Not wanting to be mistaken for a Mexican or a white, I grew my hair long, bought a fringed leather pouch to hang off my belt, threw a four strand bone choker around my neck, made a headband out of an old handkerchief."²⁰ The question that confronts King is: what was it to be Indian if one did not pay attention, if one did not *care* for just how distanced one was from the recognizable Indian (the particular

Indian)? “Everyone knew who Indians were. Everyone knew what we looked like. Even Indians.”²¹

When King and his brother by chance encountered a statue of Will Rogers, who came from a prominent Cherokee family, he was confronted with how to think of Rogers *as* Indian. Rogers’s Cherokee origin is little known: “He didn’t look Indian. Not in that constructed way. . . . I know he’s Indian, but how is anyone else going to be able to tell? But standing in that parking lot in Oklahoma with my brother, looking at that statue of Will Rogers, I realized for perhaps the first time, that I didn’t know.”²² What is it to be Indian if the conventions are not adhered to? What was the Indian if she did not appear and operate as the particular Indian does? Paradoxically, the norms and conventions of this idealized Indian have “form and power while something that is alive and kicking—Indians—are invisible.”²³ If the imagined Indian has power (that is taken to be real) while the living Indian has none, then Indians are caught in this disjuncture; indeed, this disjuncture is the space they inhabit: either conform to the norms that would allow them to be recognized as Indian or be an “apple” (red on the outside, white on the inside). In Heidegger’s account of *das Man*, he says that our “Being has been taken away from us” when we subject ourselves to others (BT 126). King is also plagued by this issue: what is it to be Indian if one does not position oneself in relation to what others expect an Indian to be?

This issue is more broadly the problem that defines human beings, and it is what Heidegger is trying to capture with his highly abstract definition of Dasein’s distinctive attribute: being-potential (*Seinkönnen*). The parameters of what we can recognize of ourselves, as well as how we experience the world, are defined by others: ideas, norms, values, and affects that we may or may not consent to and participate in. While we know that our identity is not defined and restricted to the *care* we have for the norms set by others, we also know that the possibilities for who we are and who we might be *cannot be other* than those set by *das Man*. The difference at play here is between simply falling in line with those norms (the recognizable Indian who wears a “four strand bone choker”), and confronting just how *and* if those norms, values, and expectations have a claim on me.

To be authentic, as Heidegger describes it, is not to adopt the trappings of a “recognizable Indian,” but is instead to reflect, as King does, on whether or not those idealized norms of “Indianness” are the *exclusive* possibilities for native Americans. Authenticity is not the creation of a new norm of Indianness or a new subjectivity set apart from the “standard” established by *das Man*. It is rather the comprehension of the way in which norms take hold over a subject, that is, it is a recognition of how these norms frame and limit the possibilities of my existence. As Heidegger puts it: “authentic existence is not something which floats above falling everydayness; existentially, it is only a modified way in which such everydayness is *seized upon*” (BT 179, my emphasis).²⁴

In anxiety there is a crisis of self-certainty, a questioning of the way Dasein positions itself in relation to the normative parameters issuing from *das Man* (*das Man* provides the norms by which Dasein understands itself and with which it orients itself in the world). In anxiety, “The ‘world’ can offer nothing more and neither can the Dasein-with of Others. Anxiety thus takes away from Dasein the possibility of understanding itself, as it falls, in terms of the ‘world’ and the way things have been publicly interpreted” (BT 187). To take King’s example, to think of what it is to be native American only in terms of either falling in line with the conventions of a recognizable “Indian” or being an “apple” is a closing off (*verschliessen*) of the *possible ways* in which Dasein can be.²⁵ Anxiety is precisely a disposition that individuates such that we can recognize this closing off of the possibilities of existence.²⁶ Anxiety is, in some sense, the motivation for philosophical inquiry, since anxiety is the result of *das Man* no longer having an unquestioned hold on Dasein because the norms and concepts by which one lives are no longer taken to be compelling and unreflective reasons by which to act and live. To put it differently: in anxiety there is simultaneously a recognition of the normativity of the norm and a questioning of why it no longer has an immediate hold on Dasein.

How we are to understand the individuating effect of anxiety is discussed in more detail in the account of death. The analysis of death is one of the most commented upon sections of *Being and Time*. My interest in discussing it now is to tease out a little more the meaning of individuation. I will

briefly examine here only the idea of existential death. Heidegger presents many other ways of considering death in this section: perishing (biological death), demise (the everyday conventions by which we conceive of our nonexistence), and the death of others. Heidegger describes the existential death, which is my concern here, as an “*utter and constant threat to itself arising from Dasein’s ownmost individuated [vereinzelt] Being*” (BT 265–66). He also describes the specific form of individuated self-understanding that death discloses as a “non-relational [*unbezüglich*] possibility” (BT 264). Why is existential death presented as nonrelational and individuated?

In another context, Heidegger describes individuation in a way that helps us to make sense of why existential death is individuating: “Individuation does not mean clinging obstinately to one’s own private wishes but being free for the factual possibilities of current existence” (BP 288). In the context of existential death, what this individuating aspect describes is very similar to authenticity. Authenticity is effectively contentless; it does not disclose anything particular to us and does not present some definite attribute of the self. Rather, it makes us confront the way in which our existence is necessarily framed by the possibilities into which we are thrown. What matters is the relationship we take to those possibilities. In existential death this idea is taken to the extreme. In existential death we confront the idea that death is the *elimination of all possibilities*. This serves to make us mindful that the world can matter to us only because there are possible ways that it can be and that I can be. Things matter to Dasein because it has existential death. The knowledge of its finitude and of the finitude of the referential totality in which it resides is the very condition for things mattering. In death we confront the very idea of nothing mattering, of possible ways of being that can simply terminate either our own existence or even entire cultures. “Non-relational possibility” expresses the idea that in existential death all relations to others fail Dasein.²⁷ Death, in this sense, disrupts the norms, social roles, values, and everyday practical possibilities that form Dasein’s referential totality. Death as a possible way in which Dasein can be is completely other to all the mediated possible meanings issuing from the referential totality. Indeed, death stands as the negation of these possibilities.

Dasein's confrontation with death does not isolate it from the world.²⁸ The individuation and nonrelationality of existential death does not describe a specific identifiable shape of selfhood; neither does it attempt to capture how various attitudes to death, which issue from the social conventions of *das Man*, might be wrong. In its confrontation with death, the claims those values had on Dasein no longer have a hold. In death "concern and solicitude fail us" (BT 263). The individuation is paradoxically that which discloses to us the "thereness" of existence while also showing that this whole must fail us because Dasein's own "there" threatens not to be in death (BT 263).

The self-understanding disclosed to Dasein in the authentic relation to death is of a very peculiar type: "it projects itself upon its ownmost potentiality-for-Being rather than on the possibility of the *Man*-self" (BT 263). This sentence gives the impression that Dasein's authentic relation to death is a revelation that the world is meaningless or that there is some peculiar sort of self that is only apparent to Dasein in the confrontation with death. The genuine issue is instead that death-anxiety breaks the exclusive hold of the *Man*-self over Dasein's self-relation, and it is that very break that forges a self-understanding that is not simply identical to its *Man*-self.²⁹ The transitoriness, contingency, and fragility of the world and of Dasein itself are inscribed in the very character of Dasein, and it is the individuating experience of death-anxiety that shows this to it.

In an argument clearly reminiscent of the opening paragraphs of "Sense-Certainty" in Hegel's *Phenomenology*, Heidegger remarks that language functions in its mediating way by excluding the idea of death as being mine: "In Dasein's public way of interpreting, it is said that one dies, . . . for this one is the nobody" (BT 253).³⁰ Existential death cannot be universalized. In the disposition (*Befindlichkeit*) of death-anxiety the hold of conceptual mediation over Dasein is removed. I do not die as a mere instance of the universal.³¹ It is a nonrelational possibility and it is individuated because there is no concept by which the experience of my death could be captured. Death as individuated attempts to present the absolute specificity of existential death for Dasein. While the potential for a distinctive self-understanding is disclosed in the anticipation of death, the character of its self-relation is highly abstract. It is in guilt and conscience that Heidegger

gives more detail to the self-understanding at issue. But before examining conscience, it is first important to briefly examine Dasein's care structure. The way in which Dasein is in the world and projects itself into it is structured by care.

CARE

In the concluding discussion of "Being-in," the chapter immediately before "Care as the Being of Dasein," Heidegger asks the following question about inauthenticity: if falling, the state that Dasein is in for the most part, is a losing of oneself, does this not then preclude the idea of Dasein's concern for its *Seinkönnen*? He replies that this would only be the case "if Dasein were regarded as an isolated 'I' or subject, as a self-point from which it moves away. In that case the world would be an Object" (BT 179). What he means by this is that falling into everydayness is not a state of Dasein that permanently covers authenticity. Dasein's potential to confront itself is not incompatible with falling, since falling is not a deficient mode of Dasein but simply one of the ways its being-potential is expressed. That is, falling is an existential structure of Dasein. Falling is not the covering over of an isolated I, but is instead a drive and a potentiality of Dasein that is an expression of a more fundamental structure—care, a topic that Heidegger pursues in the subsequent chapter of *Being and Time*. The focus of my discussion of care in this section is with how this primordial structure demonstrates that Dasein cannot be considered on the model of a subject over and against an object world, that is, why Dasein cannot be an "isolated I-subject."

Heidegger rails against the worldless subject of Descartes and the residual Cartesianism of many of the key figures in modern philosophy, notably Kant (cf. BT 204). Dasein, by contrast, is firmly embedded in its world; it has no transcendental ego or isolatable subjectivity that stands opposite the world it experiences. Being-in-the-world, being-with, and being-in, among other terms, are all co-original terms that Heidegger employs to emphasize that Dasein is *not* a discrete entity in the world with a definable essence

independent of its surroundings. A substantial part of the early discussion of *Being and Time* is devoted to showing the inadequacy of a model of self-world relation and intentionality that sets an isolated subject over and against an object, toward which it directs itself. By contrast, Heidegger describes the being of Dasein as “being-in” (*in-Sein*). By this he does not mean that there is a subject over and against an object with Dasein’s intentionality connecting these domains. Rather, Dasein *already* dwells with the world; it is “always already ‘outside’ in the world” (HCT 164). Dasein “cannot strictly speaking be taken as ‘between,’ since talk of a between subject and world always presupposes that two entities are given between which there is supposed to be a relation” (HCT 252).³² Care analyses just how a world could belong to Dasein as “Being-in,” that is, care presents the “structural whole of Dasein” (BT 192).³³

Being-with, being-in, and falling describe the fundamental ways in which Dasein is in the world. These terms do not describe a spatial relation; they indicate the way in which Dasein is *in* the world, or as Heidegger puts it: “the Being of the ‘there’” (BT 180). In his lectures from 1925 published as the *History of the Concept of Time*, a key transitional work to *Being and Time*, Heidegger uses the term “dwelling” (*Wohnen*) to capture the way Dasein is in the world (HCT 158). Dasein’s engagement with the world, that is, *the way in which* it dwells, is care. He uses the term “dwell” in this context precisely to evoke the idea that Dasein’s relation to the world is one in which things matter to it; dwelling is a “taking care of something” (HCT 158).

Care is, however, more than just the specific concerns and interests we have. It is the most important existential structure in *Being and Time*. It is the term Heidegger consistently uses to describe the most elemental being of Dasein (BT 182). Care is a very difficult concept to succinctly describe. It operates on at least two levels: firstly, it has both a unifying and a grounding role, that is, it captures the fundamental distinctiveness of Dasein as the being that understands and interprets what it means to be. Secondly, care also embraces the specific existential structures that frame Dasein’s directedness toward the world: as *das Man*, falling, being-with, and so on (HCT 305). Care therefore embraces the specific ways in which Dasein is

concerned with the world as well as being the “primary totality of the constitution of Dasein” (HCT 306).

Heidegger defines care this way: “what phenomenology took to be intentionality . . . the bare and isolated directing-itself-towards” is care “regarded merely from the outside.” Intentionality should be set “back into the unified basic structure of being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-involved-in” (HCT 303–4).³⁴ This does not mean that care is therefore intentionality from the inside. Care is not a mental state that decides to set upon the world in a certain way. In English, care is often conceived as a feature of the will, as in “I do not care for Earl Grey tea.” Care in this instance implies self-conscious preferences and inclinations in which a mental state is directed outward to the world by virtue of some concrete act of the will. Care, as Heidegger conceives it, is not tied to a faculty of the mind like the will. It is not the product of a specific reflective determination of the subject. Indeed, the care structure is conceived precisely to undermine a view of the subject as a mind. Care is prior to and the condition for an individual subject’s directedness toward objects. It is, however, intentionality from the inside, in the sense that care structures Dasein’s directedness toward the world. On the one hand, it lies “*before* every factual attitude and situation”; on the other hand, and seemingly paradoxically, “because it is primordially constituted by care, any Dasein is *already ahead of itself*” (BT 315).

This takes us back to the peculiar hyphenated definition of care mentioned previously (“being-ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-involved-in”), which is similarly described in *Being and Time* (BT 192). The complexity of this phrase indicates the comprehensiveness of its meaning. There are three elements here: ahead of itself, being-in, and being-involved. These three aspects of care can be understood this way: that it finds itself in a world that it has not created or chosen, that Dasein has specific concerns, and that it projects itself into future states. At this level, care is the broadly discursive, historical, and affective horizon into which every Dasein finds itself. It includes the specific content of what can matter to Dasein, which allows Dasein to project itself into the future. It represents, as we have already said, the interpretative horizon (of thought, affect, and practice) that allows Dasein to be in any sense involved with its world. This domain includes the

norms and conventions of *das Man*, history, and the general comportments, habits, and skills that Dasein acquires in everyday life and culture in which Dasein is for the most part absorbed. Care in this sense structures the specifics of Dasein's directedness toward the world: what it is concerned with, driven toward, and devoted to (HCT 303). Care, at this level, as in our earlier definition of *das Man*, provides the "context of signification" by which we make sense of the world in the specific ways that we do.

However, there are, as has already been said, other aspects to care. It is also the condition for any cognition. Knowledge and signification are meaningful and make things intelligible because they are grounded in care. Knowledge claims, propositional arguments, and scientific descriptions are not primary ways by which the world has meaning. In some sense the whole of *Being and Time* serves to discredit the idea that these could provide a primordial orientation to the world or a privileged claim on the world, since invariably the way they establish their authority and their explanatory potential is precisely by excluding affect, history, culture, and the broader interpretative structure (understanding and discourse) by which we are able to recognize something *as* something and articulate it to others. Understanding, discourse, and disposition are the basic structures that frame the character of Dasein's directedness toward objects. This multilayered structure provides the orientating horizon by which things can be intelligible.³⁵

But care has an even more elemental level: "Care, as a primordial structure of totality, lies before every factual attitude and situation of Dasein, and it does so existentially *a priori*; this means that it always lies in them" (BT 193). Care is not produced through the isolated intentions of a subject but is instead the structuring totality that allows Dasein to orient itself in the world; it is what allows us to consider things as reasons to act or as things that matter. Care is the "unifying root" of the structures of Dasein described in *Being and Time* (HCT 305). Heidegger's descriptions of this elemental level of care are not especially helpful, since they talk mostly about the unifying and elemental character of care without explaining what that is beyond the care for one's being. It is, however, the base capacity for things to matter to us, upon which *all* the other features of care are conditional.

My concern here is not to provide a detailed examination of the care structure of Dasein, what I am concerned with is the ways in which the care structure transforms the traditional model of subjectivity. As we have seen, care orients the subject in the world through the past that Dasein inherits: the practices, values, and norms that are embedded in our moods and habits. It also allows us to make intelligible and express our experiences, since discourse and understanding are also its elemental qualities. In this way, care provides Dasein with the basic interpretative coherence that allows it to engage with the world. But it also provides the basis for a form of stable selfhood that is radically different from the Cartesian subject, since that stability comes not from self-certainty or a foundational ego but from the care structure itself. Because care represents the structural whole from which individual directedness is derived, the care structure undermines the model of a subject over and against an object and any idea of subjectivity as a discrete mind that makes isolated judgments or representations.

As we have seen, care structures Dasein's individual involvements with the world and allows things to matter. Care is antecedent to any individual self, or any reflective stance that one might adopt toward the world. However, the elemental status of the care structure presents a problem for how to think of subjectivity. Care is such a comprehensive and influential concept that it is analogous to Hegelian spirit. There are at least two very important differences. Firstly, and this is Heidegger's consistent criticism of almost everyone in post-Socratic philosophy, Hegel's account of spirit ignores the question of being. Secondly, because Hegelian spirit is self-produced by subjects over time, it can be understood. These two features of spirit (self-production and comprehension) allow individual subjects to explicitly recognize the determinations of spirit as concrete determinations of their own self-consciousness. By contrast Dasein is thrown *and* is not able to understand care as self-produced; moreover, the authenticity that allows it to confront its thrownness is only possible in individuation. Individuation is not a moment of recognition, a comprehension, or a self-produced self-relation; it is, as we have seen, a "non-relational" possibility that allows Dasein to confront the possibilities of existence.

This leads to a disjuncture between thrownness and individuation. Dasein cannot achieve the kind of self-understanding of Hegelian self-consciousness, which is at least in principle able to recognize itself in the whole. Given how Heidegger conceives the care structure, such a view of selfhood is not available to Heidegger. One option open to him would be to present subjectivity as a radical individualism, in which the individuation disclosed in anxiety creates a self separate from the whole in which it is thrown. Heidegger does not, as we have already seen, take this path, but it still leaves him with the problem of how to think of the self. It is in conscience that he draws out the implications of the doubled character of Dasein for subjectivity.

CONSCIENCE AND THE AUTHENTIC SELF

Our concern here is with the way in which Heidegger challenges and transforms the traditional model of subjectivity. Such an inquiry would not ordinarily lead us to an examination of conscience, since conscience is usually considered as lying within the domain of practical philosophy. Heidegger's analysis is, however, of a completely different order: conscience as he conceives it does not give any "practical injunctions" (BT 294).³⁶ Conscience has primarily an ontological role to play by further expressing Dasein's being-potential.³⁷ The way conscience is conceived distances Dasein from traditional views of the subject in its Cartesian and idealist manifestations and serves to reinforce the idea, discussed at the very outset of the chapter, that the self at issue here could not be anything unified and harmonious. The self that Heidegger describes in conscience is divided between individuation and its thrownness.

We have already seen that anxiety and death disclose a form of individuated self-relation with which Dasein confronts the possible ways in which it can be. It is in conscience, guilt, and resoluteness that Dasein is able to give substantial form to this individuation and establish a form of self-relation that is other to its *Man*-self. In conscience, Dasein is said to be "brought

back to itself” and is “authentically itself only to the extent that . . . it projects itself along its ownmost potentiality-for-Being rather than upon the possibility of the *Man*-self” (BT 263). For reasons I have already described, whatever this authentic self-relation is, it cannot be an alternative sphere of normativity to *das Man*. *Das Man* is the only possible “context of signification” in which Dasein can operate. Conscience, as with the individuated self-understanding disclosed in anxiety, is not a model of subjectivity that is prior to or outside of human sociality. Dasein is fundamentally social and *das Man* is the exclusive sphere in which that sociality is expressed. Nevertheless an authentic self-relation requires Dasein to be able to put itself at some distance from its *Man*-self.

In order to distinguish authentic being-for-self from inauthenticity, Dasein must be able to disrupt the coherence and comprehensiveness of its *Man*-self. The call of conscience is a “kind of hearing which will interrupt” the hold *das Man* has over Dasein (BT 271). The interrupting call is distinct in that it is “unmediated.” A mediated call could not be heard through the “noise” of *das Man*. Paradoxically, despite the call being unmediated, the appeal must be understood. But this understanding is described in the most minimal terms: understanding the call of conscience is understood better the less it is “perverted” by *das Man* (BT 280).³⁸ The way the call of conscience is characterized—as an “abrupt arousal” and a “disclosedness”—indicates that it is not something spontaneously created by the self in order to counter its *Man*-self. The call does not produce through a reflective act some new, truer aspect of selfhood.

Even though the call is unmediated, it still describes a mode of discourse (*Rede*),³⁹ insofar as it gives expression to understanding or it makes something intelligible. Discourse, understanding, and disposition are three central elements of the care structure. But what Dasein must understand in the discourse of the call is in fact nothing. This presumably is all the call could announce, since any determinate utterance would be mediated and therefore an expression of *das Man*.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, this discourse of nothing is intelligible, and by it Dasein is “summoned to itself” (BT 273). What it understands and what it is summoned to is a basic state of Dasein—its “Being-guilty.” But before briefly looking at guilt, I will first examine the

origin of the call since this is central to understanding the fundamentally doubled character of conscience and selfhood Heidegger is presenting here.

The origin of the call is ambiguous: it “comes *from* me and yet *from beyond me and over me*” (BT 275). It is beyond Dasein because it functions as something that it does not control and yet it issues from Dasein itself. The “nothing” that the call expresses is indicative of Dasein’s fundamental uncanniness and individuation.⁴¹ We have already seen the way in which Dasein flees in the face of uncanniness into the security of its *Man*-self. It is in anxiety and death that an individuated self-understanding emerges that positions Dasein such that it can contest the seeming exclusivity of its *Man*-self. The call and the caller are unfamiliar to Dasein’s *Man*-self because the call is definable by “nothing at all” (BT 276). There is nothing in the call that can be recognized by Dasein’s *Man*-self, which is bound to an anonymous world of norms and values.⁴² “What could be more alien to *das Man* . . . than the Self which has been individuated down to itself in uncanniness and been thrown into the ‘nothing?’” (BT 277).

The call, even though it is described as discourse, is not communicable; it is a discourse (*Rede*) of individuation that is “unfamiliar to the everyday *Man*-self.” The unfamiliarity of the call brings Dasein back from the idle talk of *das Man* to confront its being-potential (BT 277). The call of conscience is the very opposite of Kantian conscience and guilt; Kantian conscience creates moral law by making “‘universally’ binding” the voice of *das Man*, a moral conscience that Heidegger describes as *the voice of nobody*. By contrast the call of conscience is a call that Dasein confronts as its own; indeed, it does so not by answering with the voice of nobody, but in reticence (BT 277–78). The call of conscience that Dasein hears is *prior* to and outside of any moral conscience; it is “detached from any relationship to law or ‘Ought’” (BT 283) and from any relationship to others. Conscience is, however, described as the condition for any morality precisely because the call “denies the *Man*-self its dominion” (BT 278). The implication here is that Dasein can transcend its *Man*-self.⁴³ Dasein as individuated expresses a form of self-relation that is distinguishable from the anonymity of its *Man*-self. And this self-relation allows it to take responsibility for its thrownness. But this does not mean that somehow being-guilty is

a sphere closed off from the world, and neither is it a unified autonomous subject or a true self.⁴⁴

However, before we can think of Dasein as responsible, it has to be summoned to itself,⁴⁵ which occurs by hearing the call that issues from “the uncanniness of thrown individuation” (BT 280). The call issues from the very care structure of Dasein, which is to say that care brings Dasein’s individuation to its attention. Individuated Dasein, as was discussed above, discloses “the there.” In the context of conscience, “the there” that individuation brings us to understand is our basic guilt. Guilt further develops this doubled character of selfhood. Heidegger does this through an analysis of the role of the negative in guilt. Guilt is “*Being-the-basis [Grund] of a nullity*” (BT 283). Just as he does with conscience, Heidegger distinguishes this ontological guilt from any conception of it as a moral, social, or legal debt that must be remedied. It is also distinguished from the dialectic, which uses the negative as negation (BT 286). Negation, because it resolves opposition in the determination of a new identity, subsumes the negative and in so doing ignores the genuine determinative role of nullity. The “null” character of guilt is a central claim in his analysis of conscience. “Basis” in this context means the world in which Dasein has been thrown, the “thereness” it inhabits. This world in which it is thrown has come about “*not of [Dasein’s] own accord*” (BT 284). As conscience, it hears itself as a being that has a basic freedom to choose among the various possibilities that define its present situation. This is its being-potential, yet those possibilities by which it understands itself do not have their origin in Dasein.⁴⁶

Here we have the bind in which Dasein finds itself and to which it must resolve itself: Dasein can never bring its ground or its thrownness under its power. Since it “has *not* laid that basis itself, it reposes in the weight of it,” and yet “as existing, it must take over Being-a-basis” (BT 284). Unlike Hegel’s self-producing spirit, in which human subjects are able to understand themselves as determinative *and* expressive moments, Dasein does not see thrownness as something that it has produced or as a collective product of human endeavor. Nevertheless, that Dasein can be authentic, as we have seen in the discussion above, means that Dasein is not simply determined by its thrownness, and yet it can only be itself and project into the future in

terms of the possibilities given to it by this thrownness. Authentic self-projection requires it to be responsible for its thrown existence, even though the world in which it finds itself cannot be brought under Dasein's control and does not issue from it. This is the self-understanding to which Dasein must reconcile itself: it resides between its facticity and its uncanniness. This sets up a basic paradox for Dasein in which its selfhood is located precisely in being the basis of a nullity. The "not" is "constitutive for this *Being* of Dasein" (BT 284). I will take up again shortly the role of the nullity in Dasein, but before that we need to examine further the view of selfhood that Heidegger is presenting here.

The self that is attested in conscience does not call into being a substantial subject with an essence, nor is there a substantial ego that is prior to Dasein's thrownness. What emerges in Heidegger's examination of conscience is not how conscience can motivate and direct ethical action, but two seemingly competing aspects of the self (individuated and thrown). Conscience establishes a form of self-understanding, uncanny and individuated, partitioned "by a thin wall" from its *Man*-self (BT 278). The call makes a claim on Dasein (that it is guilty), but this call issues from Dasein itself. "Precisely in passing over *das Man* (keen as it is for public repute) the call pushes it into insignificance" (BT 273). The call robs Dasein of its hiding-place in its *Man*-self and brings the self "to itself." As with the earlier discussion of death, the call dislodges the normative hold that *das Man* has over Dasein. What is disclosed is not a normative realm other to *das Man* but only Dasein in its uncanniness and individuation. The uncanny is not a home in which Dasein can reside.

This fundamentally divided character of conscience is mirrored in the structure of the call and the hearing of conscience. Both issue from Dasein, and yet they remain disjunctive and irreconcilable.⁴⁷ Dasein makes decisions within the confines of its thrownness. The world that is given frames the possible meanings and commitments that it can project for itself. This thrown world of language, tradition, history, and culture is something over which Dasein has no control. The thrown world is the basis for all Dasein's actions, reasons, and judgments. This is the world—the "there"—that it has been delivered over to, "but not of its own accord" (BT 284). This is

Dasein's "basis." "And how is Dasein its own thrown basis [*Grund*]?" Only in that it projects itself upon possibilities into which it has been thrown" (BT 284). Remember that there is no theory of the subject for Heidegger—we have no subject over and against a world. His concern is with selfhood as an expression of care. He does however appeal to a self that is for example described as "*tak[ing] over* Being a basis" (BT 285). Selfhood therefore seems to be a way of describing not a *thing*, but an understanding or a directedness toward the basis that is "released" to it. The self is in effect simply something that can claim or commit itself to the possibilities that thrownness makes available to it. This being responsible for a world that Dasein has not created is simultaneously the "origin" of selfhood and the marker of Dasein's finitude.

We have seen that Dasein inhabits the world neither as author nor as self-determining participant in the social space of norms. The linguistic and historical determinations define the context in which it is thrown, and yet significantly, this thrownness, its discursive and affective horizon, is the only possible modality for its everyday self-understanding. Moreover, it has to make a world for itself out of those possibilities that issue from *das Man*. This is what confronts Dasein in conscience: "It is never existent *before its* basis, but only *from it* and *as this* basis" (BT 284). Existentially the "not" is the constitutive moment of the guilty Dasein. As we have seen, Dasein's existential condition of being guilty is the result of having to be the basis for something of which it is *not* the basis. Indeed, its very existence is structured by having to project for itself those possibilities as the ones by which it will live. In this sense guilt is an existential structure of Dasein, since it represents a form of self-relation that is able to be separated from falling, and of this, not much can said beyond it being nonrelational, individuated, and uncanny. Dasein can only be guilty by being "closed off" from its *Man*-self. "Dasein is authentically itself in the *primordial individuation* of the reticent resoluteness which exacts anxiety of itself" (BT 322, my emphasis). This provides a minimal alternative form of self-relation that allows it to recognize its finitude, that things matter to it, and that there are possible ways in which it can be.⁴⁸ This is why Dasein stands with itself in homelessness or the uncanny (BT 286–87). The anxiety of individuation and uncanniness

ensures that Dasein cannot permanently evade its finitude; it cannot slink back into the easy consistency of its *Man*-self. The failure of the norms of *das Man* to lay an unquestioned claim on Dasein is what allows it to recognize its thrownness, which in turn allows it to treat the norms of *das Man* as possible ways in which it can be.

HEGEL AND HEIDEGGER

Heidegger argues that Kant reverts to Cartesianism in the way that he conceives of the apperceptive ego. The I that accompanies all one's representation is essentially worldless. Kant's ego has a formal structure that has the "selfsameness and steadiness of something always present-at-hand" (BT 320). The apperceptive subject is antecedent to its actions and judgments: "Kant did not see the phenomenon of the world . . . as a consequence the 'I' was again forced back to an isolated subject, accompanying representations in a way which is ontologically quite indefinite" (BT 321). The coherence and the harmony of the I and the self-determined subject are precisely what Heidegger is challenging with Dasein's care structure and the self of conscience. His response to Cartesianism and the self-determining subject is to present the self, as we have seen, as a disunity. In conscience there is no symmetry between caller and called, even though they issue from the same person. This parallels the division between the individuated self-relation of Dasein's anxious self and the mediated self-relation of its *Man*-self.

The appropriative moment of responsibility is not, in Heidegger's analysis, analogous to the responsibility underlying Kantian autonomy. Regardless of how Dasein comports itself to the norms or reasons issuing from *das Man*, it cannot understand itself as the author of those norms or as a participant in any way of their ongoing validity. Heidegger's account of care emphasizes that the determinations of meaningfulness operate on a large scale and over such a long history that they cannot really be understood as influenced by individual or collective participation. We are in a sense given over to this interpretative and historical whole in which we find ourselves.

Care attempts to capture just how we are delivered over to this sphere. The way the care structure is described means that the self simply commits itself to itself, or takes hold of itself out of this horizon of mattering. For example, responsibility, as an expression of care, is a summoning of Dasein by itself, though it is not the author of the call and the referential context of *das Man* is not something that Dasein recognizes itself as a participant in. As the ground of a nullity, Dasein does not ground the norms through any legitimating process; it seems only to respond to the given situation in which it finds itself.⁴⁹ Even though it will resolve these possibilities, it does not resolve them in the way Hegelian self-consciousness does: as norms that it applies and acknowledges as legitimate for it and that its self-consciousness comes to regard as expressions of itself.⁵⁰

The self that is attested and summoned in conscience is the very opposite of the self-positing and self-determining subject of Kant and German idealism. Conscience calls itself; it does not posit, determine, or legislate for itself. The view of subjectivity presented in conscience contests Kant's spontaneous subject, Fichte's self-positing I, and Hegel's self-consciousness. The call comes to Dasein in such a way (in silence) that it cannot be understood as spontaneous or self-caused, even though it issues from Dasein itself. It issues from Dasein but it is not *created* by Dasein; the hearing is of a nothing (a nonrelational singularity) and Dasein articulates only its own reticence. The structure of self that is articulated in conscience—"Being the basis of a nullity"—is positioned directly against the autonomous subject.⁵¹

Care is the broad interpretative and meaningful structure that holds sway over us and provides us with an orientation toward the world. We cannot have anything like a coherent understanding of it. The self can then only be a nullity or commit itself on the basis that its thrownness is not something that it could have under its control or see itself as a determinate moment of. The way, for example, Hegel establishes history as a collective human project of self-correction, moving spirit forward through determinate insufficiencies, is the very opposite of the care structure and how Dasein understands its relationship to care. Hegel's self-determining subject and self-producing spirit assume a self-transparency that is impossible on the Heideggerian view; his self is not a product of self-producing spirit. Care is just something

that is “there,” that comes before Dasein, and to which Dasein must establish a relation. And because that relation is one that presents Dasein as individuated, Dasein cannot see itself completely as an expression of the care structure. The only way Heidegger can therefore proceed is to present the self as essentially divided. While we cannot reconcile ourselves with care, we do have to reconcile ourselves to being individuated *and* thrown.

Hegel also criticizes the worldlessness of Kant’s ego, but he offers a very different corrective to it. The separation of mind and world that Hegel thinks permeates the Kantian program has its basis in a cluster of related dualisms, which were discussed in the previous chapter: concept/intuition and spontaneity/causality.⁵² Hegel responds to these dualisms and the worldlessness of the Kantian subject by situating the subject firmly in the world. Spirit captures a diverse field of elements that Hegel took to be involved in the formation of norms, experiences, and judgments. It includes such things as social, affective, and historical features that were excluded from Kant’s approach. It is clear in the way Hegel presents ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) and the various shapes of spirit in the *Phenomenology* that the subject cannot be understood as isolated from the world. The very idea of a shape of spirit is designed to embed the subject in concrete human praxis and history.⁵³ The way Heidegger conceives of the relation of Dasein to care and history is such that its self-relation, as thrown, cannot be isolated from the whole in which it finds itself. Its capacity for self-interpretation is fundamentally in and of its world. Both Heidegger and Hegel respond to the worldlessness of Kant’s subject by showing that the intentional and the self-interpreting character of subjectivity requires it to be situated in the whole. It is, however, the way Hegel conceives of the negative that reveals a stark difference in their respective accounts of subjectivity.

The distinct form of individuated self-relation that emerges in death and conscience cannot, as has been discussed above, transcend the specific forms of intelligibility that issue from *das Man*.⁵⁴ The particular norms and values by which we act and orient ourselves in the world are not produced, claimed, and adhered to on the basis of acts of self-legislation or self-determination. Most of what we do, how we act, and how we comport ourselves is not the result of such reflective acts. We simply fall in line with *das Man*—these

are the values, habits, and practices passively transmitted to us in the specificities of our cultural life.⁵⁵ Even though for the most part, we incorporate them without any reflective act of the will or reason, they nevertheless provide the content of what matters to us; they constitute the significances that make the world meaningful for us in the specific ways that it is. For example, the kind of petty competition and comparisons that the consumer economy cultivates have to be understood as motivations that are not self-determined principles but that are nevertheless significant determiners of what counts as a “meaningful” life in a consumer society. Generally, such norms are *not* considered as produced over time by a historical process of self-correction; they are just taken to be reality, more so because they are aligned with affects, moods, and dispositions. The way Heidegger sets up these conventions and norms is that Dasein is “ensnared” in them and that it is indeterminate who established them and why they have a hold on us. In anxiety we are made aware that the norms that govern what matters to us and that frame the character of our involvement lose their hold on us; they are not self-determined reasons—just averageness (BT 127).

The division between the individuated anxious self and its *Man*-self would be unacceptable to Hegel. In the first instance such unmediated singularity or individuation is simply impossible. For Hegel there is no unresolved dissonance, or if there is, it is only because, as with Greek tragedy, the whole in which the clash of norms takes place is insufficiently rational to resolve such a tension. Self-consciousness is not something that could be divided in the way Heidegger’s self is. Where for Heidegger anxiety shows the failure of *das Man* or the care structure to take hold over the subject, in Hegel’s case the negative is the result of a discordance between the whole and individual self-understanding. The anxiety and dismemberment that consciousness experiences, in Hegel’s case, motivate consciousness to reestablish a coherent self-understanding.

As was discussed in the previous chapter, Hegel is interested in how and why norms lose their hold on subjects. Just as with Heidegger, the subject’s experience of anxiety heralds the failure of norms or a shape of life. In many often quoted passages from the preface and introduction to the *Phenomenology*, Hegel appeals to anxiety as a way of showing the crisis in

self-understanding both of an individual self-consciousness and of spirit itself. Anxiety has a role to play in the labor of the negative. It represents, at the level of self-feeling, the inadequacy of claims to know or a failure of a shape of life. In Hegel's case, anxiety does not disclose a form of individuated self-relation; it is instead the motivation for a change in the self-understanding of the subject. The natural consciousness is constantly strained by the restlessness of its thought, which consistently undermines its claims to know. This indicates a fundamental alienation by which the self becomes other to itself.

Overcoming this discordance is the labor of the negative. And this labor is also the way in which the subject discloses the character of its own self-relation:

Consciousness is for itself its concept, and as a result it immediately goes beyond the restriction, and, since this restriction belongs to it, it goes beyond itself too. . . . But it can find no peace; even if it wants to remain in an unthinking lethargy, thought spoils thoughtlessness, and its unrest disturbs that lethargy. . . . Even if it fortifies itself with sentimentality which assures it that it will find that everything *is good in its own way*, that assurance likewise suffers violence by the rationality that straightaway finds out that precisely because it is "that way," it is thus not good.

(PhS §80/GW9 63)

The labor of the negative, the magical power that converts this discordance into being, is something that consciousness inflicts upon itself. The suffering that consciousness experiences by its own hands serves a program of self-correction. The self-correcting movement is driven forward by the aspiration of spirit to comprehend itself. The tension between the "whole" it intuits and its knowledge is the source of reason's dissatisfaction. But this is indicative of the very character of consciousness itself. Spirit is in a constant state of self-transformation. Even though self-consciousness can be nothing stable, it nevertheless strives to understand itself. Its own thinking makes it unstable but this is just the motivation for self-comprehension.

Heidegger, by contrast, as we have seen throughout, is content to let the divisions lie: anxiety does not cause a dismemberment that spirit strives to correct, but is rather simply a division that is our existential condition. In Hegel's case such tensions serve the labor of a negative that strives for self-knowledge. While it may strive for wholeness, its knowledge must of necessity be inadequate. Consciousness strives to understand itself in terms of the whole, but consciousness can never have an understanding of itself, because the dynamics of the interpretative parameters are such that its own self-relation is always ahead of itself. Thought is the whole, not an isolated subject. Because self-consciousness thinks and has reason, the whole is reflected in it. The discursive field, in its self-transforming totality, frames human thinking. That whole is always ahead of itself because those concepts are constantly being transformed by virtue of the dynamism of spirit. This means that self-consciousness and self-understanding can never be identical, since the whole is always already beyond where we knowingly take ourselves to be at any point in time. In the discussion of Derrida and Deleuze in the remaining two chapters, I take up these issues in more detail.

5

DERRIDA AND THE QUESTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

HEIDEGGER AND POSTSTRUCTURALISM make a sustained case for presenting Kant, Hegel, and Descartes as the iconic figures of the philosophy of subjectivity. Unlike Deleuze, however, as we will see in the next chapter, Derrida is willing to claim that even this triumvirate can be read against the grain. One can find “aporias, fictions and fabrications” that undermine and problematize the coherence of the subjectivity upon which this philosophical canon appears to be grounded. “This would have at least the virtue of de-simplifying, of ‘de-homogenizing’ the reference to something like The Subject. There has never been The Subject for anyone. . . . The Subject is a fable.”¹ This fable of the subject is nevertheless powerful. An edifice of potent concepts has been built on it—self-determination, autonomy, mastery, identity, and self-knowledge—all of which have become defining concepts for philosophy’s metaphysical and ethical inquiries. Despite Derrida’s willingness to see fractures and limits in the great works of the canon of philosophy in figures from Plato to Husserl, one can only understand the development of notions such as *différance* and his other key terms in response to a dominating and uniform tendency within the tradition. For Derrida, Hegel is the figure in modern philosophy whose thought takes these tendencies to their high point, the point at which their limitations show themselves.

There is something of a tradition in seeing the development of French thought after 1968 as a corrective to perceived flaws in Hegel's system.² Hegel is the enemy of dualisms such as concept/intuition, real/ideal, faith/knowledge, and so on. All of this, so the story goes, Hegel tries to resolve through the syncretizing movement of the dialectic, at the center of which is the authoritative self-determining subject. Ultimately the movement of the dialectic is concluded in absolute knowing, where this rational subject is shown to be identical with the whole. This conclusion completes the movement of the metaphysics of subjectivity. Hegel is the theorist of recognition and reconciliation, whose thought operates by recirculating the old or by turning what is other into the same. On this view, Hegel's system is restricted because any difference that could transform the system is tightly regulated by the formulaic movement of the dialectic. For Derrida, the dialectic and the general trajectory of the philosophical tradition are crystallized in Hegel's *Logic* by the reduction of difference to contradiction. The categories in Hegel's *Logic* represent a stable oppositional reality that progresses by reconciling differences. The picture that emerges of Derrida's criticisms of Hegel and of the philosophical tradition more generally is that of a system that tries to fix reality. This tradition assumes that the categories of thought can bring to full presence all of a given reality. Derrida's concern is to show the limitations of that system, in particular, its failure to capture the instability that is at the heart of any interpretative schema. Inscribe that instability into philosophy requires a destabilizing of the program of the philosophical tradition. In contrast to the approach of Hegel, *différance*, rather than reconciling dualisms, destabilizes oppositions.

Derrida applauds Hegel's negative but not the economy it serves in his system. Negativity proceeds by including what it excludes; it creates a self-enclosed economy that is described by Derrida as the "Encyclopedia [that] gives itself birth. The conception of the Concept is an auto-insemination."³ There is no other to thought on this model; the determinations of difference are internally constructed or subsumed into the whole through the totalizing movement of Hegel's negative.⁴ The singular is thought only in relation to the universal. From Derrida's perspective this amounts to the elimination of singularity and difference. Derrida contests the uniformity of this model

by presenting universality and singularity in irreconcilable tension, but a tension that is productive of difference.

Hegel's thought is not the culmination of the metaphysics of presence.⁵ Simply seeing Hegel as collapsing and reinstalling conceptual oppositions that are "auto-inseminated" by the dialectic and the Concept ignores Hegel's response to the defining questions of post-Kantian philosophy.⁶ Once we give up on the caricatured reading of Hegel, then we can begin to distinguish Derrida's and Hegel's views of the subject. Derrida asserts that any "post-deconstructive" reconception of the subject would have to be "a non-coincidence with self" and "the finite experience of non-identity to self."⁷ This description of subjectivity is not straightforwardly opposed to Hegel's conception of subjectivity. Derrida describes Hegel's subject as "absolute origin, pure will, identity to self, or presence to self of consciousness."⁸ Once the view of Hegel as a metaphysician of presence is put to rest, a clear continuity of concern between Hegel's and Derrida's projects can be seen. Of course there are substantive differences between these thinkers, and their views of subjectivity diverge, but the basis of that divergence is not because Hegel is a philosopher of presence.

THE HEIDEGGERIAN BACKGROUND

The poststructuralist questioning of the subject and its strategy for exiting the metaphysics of the subject have their origin in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. The examination of this issue by Derrida and those who have been influenced by his thought has consistently emphasized the importance of Heidegger's analysis of subjectivity for the development of the deconstructive approach to the problem. As we saw in chapter 1, *Being and Time* (and the lectures from that period that have since been published such as *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*) equates the reflective model of subjectivity with the metaphysical tradition. The attributes of this reflective subject are self-identity, self-disclosure through reflection, and its identity is self-contained and transparent to it. Dasein, by contrast, has a very different

type of self-relation; its distinctiveness lies in a peculiar type of questioning, namely, that “in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it” (BT 12). Its openness to being is the fundamental condition of its subjectivity, a situation that ensures that Dasein’s self-relation is not self-identical. Because Dasein is fundamentally other-directed, it cannot be considered as present to itself. Dasein is incapable of anything like full self-disclosure, since it could never be completely reconciled or identical with the conditions of its existence. While it must adopt a relation to them, they do not issue from a world under its moral or epistemic control.

Despite his substantial differences with Heidegger, Derrida accepts his fundamental criticism of the philosophical tradition as the metaphysics of presence. Derrida’s early works, for example, *Speech and Phenomena*, clearly demonstrate the extent to which he adopts Heidegger’s critique:

Within the metaphysics of presence, within philosophy as knowledge of the presence of the object, as the being-before-oneself of knowledge in consciousness, we believe, quite simply and literally, in absolute knowledge as the closure if not the end of history. . . . The history of being as presence, as self-presence in absolute knowledge, as consciousness of self in the infinity of *parousia*—this history is closed. The history of presence is closed, for history has never meant anything but the presentation [*Gegenwärtigung*] of being, the production and recollection of beings in presence, as knowledge and mastery.⁹

The metaphysics of presence is concerned with the control of objective being. It effects this control by conceiving being purely at what Heidegger would call the ontic level, as a totality of entities, which allows being to be defined and known. Being is conceived exclusively as something determined by the perceiving and knowing subject. The subject-centered trajectory of metaphysics is embodied, as we will see shortly, for Derrida in *Aufhebung* (sublation) and dialectic.

Heidegger’s critique of the metaphysics of presence, as we saw in chapter 1, concentrates on the subject conceived as self-consciousness, which he takes to be the foundation of modern philosophy: “The motive of this

primary orientation toward the subject in modern philosophy is the opinion that this being which we ourselves are is given to the knower first as the only certain thing, that the subject is accessible immediately and with absolute certainty, that it is better known than all objects" (BP 123). The founding act of modern philosophy was Descartes's reorienting of the concerns of medieval philosophy such that truth, rather than being disclosed in the world, is relocated into the subject, from which it then projects *its* truth onto the world. This decisive shift in perspective grounds meaning in the subject. As a consequence, being comes to be conceived as present-at-hand (*vorhanden*), that is, available to subjectivity as an object of knowledge. Heidegger's claim is that Descartes's project does not mark a new beginning for philosophy but is rather just an extreme version of earlier philosophy: "it became a mode of thought, that with the aid of traditional ontological concepts, seeks to gain a positively ontical knowledge of God, the soul, and nature" (BP 124). Descartes appropriates unquestioningly the presuppositions of earlier metaphysics. His turn to the subject inscribes the project of earlier metaphysics into the subject without ever asking "the question of the being of the subject" (BP 124). The cogito simply provides a more stable foundation for the traditional philosophical concern to conceive all objects as potential objects of knowledge. The self-present subject envisages only one possibility for the mind/world relation: a one-sided relation of knower to known.

Derrida's interpretation of modern philosophy largely accepts Heidegger's diagnosis of it, as we saw in the previously cited passage from *Speech and Phenomena*. The theme of presence as mastery, control, and containment reaches its apotheosis in Hegel's idea of sublation (*Aufhebung*). Sublation and the dialectic provide a purified and systematic philosophical method for presence. One can see therefore why Hegel's thought is for Derrida a marked point of contrast with his own project. Sublation (*Aufhebung*) appears to turn everything into the present-at-hand (*Vorhandenheit*). Its process or resolving opposition ensures that nothing is lost; all experience becomes available for the examination of the conscious subject, as spirit internalizes all difference. The historical and logical program of mastering meaning and transforming all otherness into something

repeatable and available is anchored in subjectivity. Hegel's unification of concept and consciousness allows the identification of the subject with the world. Self-consciousness masters itself because that self comes to be identified with the whole (M 73). The *Aufhebung* is thereby embodied in the notion of self-consciousness.

Truth is here the presence or presentation of essence as *Gewesenheit*, of *Wesen* as having-been. Consciousness is the truth of man to the extent that man appears to himself in consciousness in his Being-past, in his to-have-been, in his past surpassed and conserved, retained, interiorized and *relevé* [*aufheben*]. . . . What is difficult to think today is an end of man which would not be organized by a dialectics of truth and negativity, an end which would not be a teleology in the first person plural. The we, which articulates natural and philosophical consciousness with each other in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, assures the proximity to itself of the fixed and central being for which this circular reappropriation is produced. The *we* is the unity of absolute knowledge and anthropology, of God and man, of ontotheology and humanism.¹⁰

(M 120–21)

All meaning in this movement is tied to man; all the structures of logic, phenomenology, even nature and spirit are at the very least adumbrations of man. There is a transition from finite man assured of self-certainty in Descartes to a form of self-relation in Hegel that relates to itself in the external world by seeing the world as subject.

OVERCOMING THE SELF-PRESENT SUBJECT

Hegel's thought has most often had a kind of central negative function in the development of deconstruction. Not content with simply examining the core metaphysical oppositions of the philosophical tradition, Hegel wants to resolve them, collapsing contradictions into a unified structure. Hegel's

thought is read almost exclusively in terms of the model of presence: "Hegelian idealism consists precisely of a *relève* of the binary oppositions of classical idealism, a resolution of contradiction into a third term that comes in order to *aufheben*, . . . while *interning* difference in a self-presence."¹¹ The defining dualisms of the philosophical tradition (spontaneity/passive, real/ideal, concept/intuition, heteronomy/autonomy) also represent its limitation, because it takes the world, experience, and meaning to be governed by these oppositions. Philosophy employs these concepts to fix reality by assuming either that the categories of thought accord with the given structure of reality or—and this is the philosophical orientation of most interest to Derrida—that the real is authoritatively determined by a subject who imposes these concepts on the world and thereby prescribes for it an order.

Derrida is not arguing that these two approaches get reality wrong because there is some other reality, which is outside human thought and subjectivity, to which one could appeal as an alternative authority. His primary concern is to show the limitations of any system that would seek to determine the nature of reality. All such approaches are unable to capture the instability and fractures that are constitutive of any interpretative schema. Deconstruction inscribes that instability into philosophy itself, but to do so requires a disrupting of the philosophical tradition. While *différance* is far more than just a foil to Hegel's dialectic, Derrida, in a passage cited above, nevertheless describes it this way: "if there were a definition of *différance*, it would be precisely the limit, the interruption of the Hegelian *relève* wherever it operates."¹² *Différance* challenges the dialectical resolving of contradiction and the discursive hierarchies that are produced through this resolution. *Différance* breaks the economy of negativity. Derrida does not reject the negative as a critical force; what needs to be challenged is the empire it serves.

Derrida claims, and this is something reproduced in Deleuze, that philosophy inadequately describes the diverse ways meaning systems are transformed. Whatever Derrida fully intends by *différance*, it is clear that the generative power of *différance*, which is the condition for differences, is nothing stable. The standard terms for conceiving how the new is developed—"produce," "constitute," and "create"—cannot capture the inherent instability

that generates the various relations constitutive of difference. Hegel's Logic, in Derrida's judgment, represents the grandest and final philosophical attempt to systematize the generative and transformative processes that create difference. Thought, experience, and singularity cannot be methodologically restricted by the dialectic. The instability and diversity that are inherent in the complex processes by which differences emerge cannot be captured in such a systematized and discursive form. The movement of the negative is captured by the dialectic as the emergence of an opposition that is then reconciled. Derrida by contrast seeks to mark instability in a way that gestures at it without it ever being able to make a transparent program of knowledge. The oppositional logic of the core distinctions that philosophy uses to neatly demarcate its world ("sensible/intelligible, intuition/signification, nature/culture") is explicitly challenged by *différance*, which "cannot be governed by or distributed between the terms of this opposition."¹³

Différance also has the temporal implication of something being deferred. The deferring and instability that are the markers of *différance* are necessary because the standard categories by which something could be explained, such as the dualisms referred to in the previous paragraph, cannot conceive difference, which is therefore deferred. There is no direct access to a primordial object domain or to transcendental conditions. Any conception of the world is always deferred to an alternative interpretative economy: "an element functions and signifies, takes on and conveys meaning, *only by* referring to another past or future element in an economy of traces."¹⁴ *Différance* does not thereby establish a new, superior perspective from which the world could be examined or corrected in a manner that would make its concerns continuous with the explanatory enterprise of the philosophical tradition.

DERRIDA'S CHALLENGE TO THE UNIFIED SUBJECT

Derrida's concerns with, for example, play, the structure of meaning and of language, and writing rather than speech suggests not only that he was unconcerned with amending modern subjectivity but that he sought to

abandon the notion altogether. The world was a text without agents and authors. Such a conclusion would, however, be incorrect: subjectivity is important; it just needs some deconstructive “resituating.”¹⁵ Reconceiving subjectivity is a necessary implication of *différance*. *Différance* is explained as the “disappearance of any originary presence”; by this he means that it has a doubled character: “*at once* the condition of possibility and the condition of the impossibility of truth.”¹⁶ In an interview in the late 1980s, Derrida describes the doubled character of subjectivity this way: “It is because I am not one with my myself that I can speak with the other and address the other.”¹⁷ A subject is unable to be self-identical because the interpretative frame through which it relates to itself and the world does not issue from self-identity, but from the complex discursive horizon in which it finds itself. One’s self-relation cannot be an expression of an essential self-identity since those interpretative features (that do not originate from the subject) allow it to relate to both itself and others. It is in this sense that the I is not with itself because it is *already* someone other. I want now to examine in further detail why Derrida considers the divided quality of *différance* a model for revising subjectivity. As we will see, though Hegel does not describe his subject as divided, his account of the subject shares many features with Derrida’s account of subjectivity.

The self-identical subject of traditional metaphysics adopts a controlling or appropriative position with regard to what is other to it. In contrast Derrida’s interests have most often been with what is “outside” of the subject. While much of Derrida’s thought has been concerned with the game, and not the subject playing it, the subject does of course have a place within this play. Discerning his conception of the subject can be difficult, since it is intimately bound to the canon of deconstructive terms: *différance*, trace, and so on. None of these terms has meanings that can be explained without reference to the deconstructive project as a whole. Moreover, these terms have to be understood as contesting the general structure of the philosophical program that he characterizes as the metaphysics of presence.

Derrida’s reexamination of the subject required demonstrating that the entire philosophical system of presence can be shown its limitations and transformed. In the 1970s, Derrida already recognized the implications of

différance for any reevaluation of subjectivity: "The subject is not present, nor above all to itself before *différance*, . . . the subject is constituted only in being *divided* from itself."¹⁸ Rudolf Bernet describes this division this way: "Feeling responsible for a self that never comes simply from oneself is the sort of self-experience which characterizes the finite subject."¹⁹ Human finitude is marked by the disparate sources that constitute subjectivity, sources that are never merely mine, but are delivered to me; they are not caused by me and they are not a mirroring in the world of some inner essence of the self. Nevertheless, one's self-relation is necessarily expressed in this "language," that is, I have to take responsibility for myself even though the language, norms, and values by which I necessarily experience and judge the world are not determined by me.

The metaphysical tradition recognizes this fundamental division, but it attempts to resolve it by establishing an absolute subject or an autonomous subject. For Derrida, the subject is more adequately conceived as a self-relation that is an irreconcilable heteronomy. Subjectivity is not to be found, for example, in the assertion of the dominance of autonomy over heteronomy or in a transcendental subject. Subjectivity is better understood as residing in the experience of these divisions.

Numerous figures in modern thought have characterized the subject as divided; Freud's division between the conscious and unconscious is perhaps the most famous example. It is, however, Saussure and Heidegger to which Derrida most often appeals when citing figures who confronted that division. In the case of Saussure he comments: "Language, and in general every semiotic code—which Saussure defines as 'classifications'—are therefore effects, but their cause is not a subject, a substance, or a being somewhere present and outside the movement of *différance*. . . . There is no subject who is agent, author, subject and of *différance*. . . . Subjectivity—like objectivity—is an effect of *différance*, an effect inscribed in a system of *différance*."²⁰ In Saussure's semiology, the subject finds itself in a world that it is not responsible for, since it is—in Heidegger's language—thrown. The only way in which the subject can make some place for itself in the world and relate to it is by using language, which the subject is not the cause of, but that it must use to understand itself. The subject has no access to itself or the world other

than through this linguistic system. This does not mean that the subject and the world it experiences are identical to the semantic field issuing from language. The subject inhabits this division to which it cannot reconcile itself.

Divided subjectivity could be seen as the defining issue of human finitude. Where the tradition seeks to unite singularity with the whole, Derrida is content to leave the division unreconciled: "it is out of this *dislocated* affirmation that something like subject, man or whoever it might be takes shape."²¹ This dislocation is the result of the singularity of subjectivity (about which I will have something to say shortly) precluding its unity with the whole. *Différance* is also posited as antecedent to but coextensive with the subject; it defines the determinative field in which the subject is situated: "Identity is not the self-identity of a thing, this glass for instance, . . . but implies a unity within difference. That is the identity of a culture is a way of being different from itself; a culture is different from itself; language is different from itself; the person is different from itself. . . . In the case of culture, person, nation, language, identity is a self-differentiating identity, an identity different from itself, having an opening or gap within itself."²² A subject's claims about itself cannot be equal to itself, since the diversity, movement, and openness of determinations of the subject ensure that it cannot be self-identical. The subject is not one with itself because it is constituted by what exceeds it: "Consciousness is the effect of forces whose essence, byways, and modalities are not proper to it. . . . *Différance* is the name we give to the 'active,' moving direction of different forces, and of different forces, that Nietzsche sets up against the entire system of grammar, wherever this system governs culture, philosophy, and science" (M 17–18). Language and speech, the possibility of opening oneself to another, responsibility: these are possible only because the subject is not self-identical. Derrida's divided subject mirrors what we have seen in chapter 4 of Heidegger's analysis of Dasein, especially in its essential guilt structure. Heidegger does allow this division to be overcome, for example, by resolute action in *Being and Time*. Derrida's central criticism of Heidegger is that the language of *eigen* (own) does not allow an escape from the appropriative teleology of Western metaphysics.²³ Despite Heidegger's pleading for being to

presence itself to man rather than considering man the determiner of being, Heidegger's privilege of Dasein as the questioner preserves its responsibility as a matter for a single authoritative subject. The metaphorical concepts they employ are instructive: Heidegger refers to *Versammlung*, gathering, collecting, mineness, authenticity; Derrida, by contrast, prefers disassociation, rupture, trace, multiplicity, aporia.²⁴

Derrida's subject is plagued by an original loss that can never be unified; consequently the divided subject exists in a perpetual state of dispossession, since its experience is a "loss of what one never had."²⁵ It aspires to self-presence, to have knowledge of self, but its divided character excludes any such self-relation. Again we see the subject hovering between all the dualisms. The subject "marks a middle voice between active and passive."²⁶ It attempts to desist such oppositions and thereby make itself stable and able to coherently assert itself on the world, but it cannot do that since the resources it draws on to achieve this are unstable. What is critical in understanding why such a conception of the subject is a counter to Hegelian subjectivity is that Derrida's divided subject cannot identify with either itself or the whole; his subject resides in the gap between these domains. This subject is not just a division; it is also a type of singularity that is unable to be circumscribed within a hierarchical conceptual schema. Singularity, in this sense, is not something that we can make available to ourselves as something knowable, but is instead instantiated only, for example, in actions such as taking responsibility.²⁷

AUTONOMY, SINGULARITY, AND RESPONSIBILITY

In the later part of Derrida's career, he wrote a series of works on responsibility that developed his critique of the subject by challenging the pervasive Kantian view of autonomous subjectivity. This challenge did not simply redefine a new type of moral subject but sought to undermine the notion of responsibility that such a subject assumes. Understanding how Derrida challenges the view of the autonomous subject requires an analysis of the

way he conceives of singularity, since this bears the conceptual burden of his examination of autonomous subjectivity and responsibility.

In remarking in *The Gift of Death* that “our personal speaking is not personal,” Derrida appears to paraphrase a well-known passage from Hegel.²⁸ However, in explaining why this is the case, he appeals to Heidegger’s account of death: “Just as no one can die in my place, no one can make a decision, what we ‘call a decision,’ in my place” (GD 60). As soon as one speaks, as soon as one enters the medium of language, singularity is lost. In Hegel’s case, as the opening section of the *Phenomenology* explains, the singular is only thinkable in relation to universality. The singular is only meaningful by virtue of its mediated place in a syllogism. Heidegger presents an alternative to Hegel on this issue, which allows the singular to assume a role outside the mediated configuration that Hegel confines it to. In Heidegger’s account of death, the non-substitutability of another death for my own death illustrates the unmediated singularity of Dasein: Dasein’s “mineness” is unsubstitutable in death.²⁹ Derrida adopts this notion of singularity throughout his writings, but it has its most prominent and clearest discussion in the notion of responsibility developed in *Aporias* and *The Gift of Death*.

As with Heidegger’s authentic confrontation with death, Derridean responsibility and the decision involved in being responsible are not substitutable. The decision is always singular: “the first effect of or first destination of language therefore involves depriving me of or delivering me from my singularity. By suspending my absolute singularity in speaking, I renounce at the same time my liberty and my responsibility” (GD 60). Derrida’s singular is not part of a syllogism and is not mediated; it is always the “exception” (GD 87). He distinguishes responsibility, which involves a singular decision, from ethics. In *Aporias* and *The Gift of Death*, ethics is described as the public giving and asking for reasons. The type of public responsibility expected in ethics takes place within an exchange economy of determinations. Ethics is an exchange of predetermined values that are necessarily mediated and communicable. In Derrida’s case responsibility cannot simply be the methodological application of a universal to a singular. If we treat laws and conventions as if they were a calculable method that can, by virtue

of that calculability, guarantee a just outcome, we in fact abrogate responsibility. In this sense ethics makes us irresponsible (GD 61). The responsible decision has to be singularly mine. Before examining singularity in more detail, I will first lay out what I take to be the two central features of Derrida's notion of responsibility.

Firstly, Derrida stresses the limits of any system of ethics and governance. Those limitations are apparent in the secrets and sacrifices upon which every ethical order is built on:

The smooth functioning of . . . a society, the monotonous complacency of its discourse on morality, politics, and the law, and the exercise of its rights . . . are in no way impaired by the fact that, because of the structure of the laws of the market that society has instituted, because of the mechanisms of external debt and other similar inequities, that same society puts to death or *allows* to die of hunger and disease tens of million of children . . . without any moral or legal tribunal every being considered competent to judge such a sacrifice.

(GD 86)

Ethical communities are finite and the principles underlying them serve an internal economy that ignores both the world's others and the effects of those finite economies on others. In stressing the circumscribed quality of nations, economies, and societies, Derrida is not advocating relativism. He is not asserting that the absence of a single unifying moral or ethical code results in a system of *equally valid* competing ethical codes. His concern is broader: all systems of ethics function either with disregard for others or explicitly by excluding others. Even when the claims for morality are universal, the absoluteness of any claim is always unsustainable since ethical systems are always in a state of transformation. Moreover, the extension of those universals to others often involves injustice. These economies of ethics always involve an unacknowledged and yet necessary sacrifice.

Derrida illustrates this point with a seemingly less weighty example than the conceit and myopia of Western liberalism. When I feed this cat, I am sacrificing the others I don't feed. My responsibility to this cat here is

realized only by renouncing my responsibility to all the others: "That I prefer or sacrifice anyone (any other) to the other" is a sacrifice that cannot be justified by universal principles (GD 70).³⁰ One does not feed the universal cat; one feeds *this* cat. One cannot take responsibility for the universal, for all the others, for the general; one can only be responsible for this cat by sacrificing all the others. The sacrifice itself is secret or purely private because the cat I take responsibility for, while an instance of the universal cat, is immediately singular. Why I take this singular animal as the one to be cared for over all others is the result of contingencies and desires that are not justifiable (GD 71). What binds me to this cat is its absolute singularity. It is this cat "here" and "now." One's response to the singularity of the other is beyond the finite economies of ethics and morality. Who is treated equally is defined by the internal determinations of an ethical system. Those internal interrecognitive relations determine, for example, who is a subject and who can count as a moral agent. The question Derrida asks is how to respond to something that is other to these ethical systems. Without an other to ethics, there is no opportunity for a system to transform itself, and this would deprive a finite ethical system of the possibility of justice. There has to be somewhere outside the economy of ethicality that can show the limits of that ethical system and provide the possibility for a justice that one might strive to realize in an ethical order.

The second feature of Derrida's formulation of responsibility, and this extends the previous point, is the quasi-transcendental status he establishes for a range of notions like singularity, *différance*, and trace. *Différance* (and the spectrum of concepts that are commensurate with it) has a regulatory role in producing differences and it serves as a condition for all meaning, but it is only quasi-transcendental because *différance* is not a structure or condition that can be known and schematized. It cannot be made present. These notions are conditions for thinking, experience, and meaning but are not themselves recoverable. They function as animating tensions. This is also what the singular is supposed to identify. Singularity is outside the economy of all determinate systems, but it also makes them possible.

Derrida's comments about the status and role of the singular have to be understood in the context of his persistent criticism of the idea of

home as a model for thought. The idea of thought reconciling, identifying, or coinciding with being or the whole is a pervasive philosophical aspiration.³¹ When philosophy takes this to be its ambition, it produces knowledge and concepts with which to make conscious subjectivity comfortable or at home in the world. It looks for an economy or enduring structure of concepts with which it might create a stable edifice by which we can relate with certainty to one another and the world. He contrasts his own project against such a picture of philosophy: "you can well see that it is not because I wish to appease or *reconciliate* that I prefer to employ the mark '*différance*' rather than refer to the system of difference-and-contradiction."³² Derrida's project is concerned to show the limits to systems or economies that are constructed to provide generalizable and transferable meaning. The system of stability and uniformity is above all symbolized by Hegel's dialectic and the *Aufhebung*, "which represents the irrefutable demand for manifestation" (GD 63).³³ In contrast, Derrida's singular is not something that can be possessed or that one can be at home in; it resists stability and reconciliation. It is prior to these systems and yet makes them possible. It is only quasi-transcendental because it is not something that can be made manifest.

These two elements of responsibility—the sacrificial economy of the ethical and quasi-transcendental singularity—cannot be polarized or turned into a new dualism that might be resolved. Singularity, for example, is not a fixed limit to an ethical system. Derrida is invested in those systems remaining open and capable of transformation; indeed, singularity is the condition for their transformation. Singularity has a persistent relation to any economy or system, though that relation is not one that could be fixed within that order. Derrida remarks:

To protect the decision or the responsibility by knowledge, by some theoretical assurance, or by the certainty of being right, of being on the side of science, of consciousness or of reason, is to transform this experience into the deployment of a program, into a technical application of a rule or a norm, or into the subsumption of a determined "case." *All these are conditions that must never be abandoned*, of course, but that, as such, are

only the *guardrail* of a responsibility to whose calling they remain radically heterogeneous.³⁴

As this passage makes clear, the notion of responsibility that Derrida is concerned to present does not occur in a sphere wholly other to ethics. Responsibility requires the dislocated and unmediated singularity of the decision, but it also requires the application of a rule or norm.³⁵ The singular operates as both transcendent and immanent: it represents a limit to finite ethical communities, but it also provides them with the kind of instability and heterogeneity that allow for their transformation.³⁶

Derrida ties responsibility to singularity in order to undermine the Kantian model of responsibility (and the autonomous subject it assumes), in which one acts as if one were the author of a law.³⁷ He argues that ethics ought to be understood in Kantian terms: the application of a regulative norm. This model results in an effectively closed ethical system since one's duties involve acting in accordance with a regulative idea. Derrida, as with Kantian autonomy, wants his singular responsibility to be something that is mine, but the basis of that "mineness" is not Kant's self-legislative I, in which I freely act *as if* I were the author of the law. Derridean responsibility is a "heteronomy of an 'it's my outlook' . . . I cannot pre-empt by my own initiative whatever is commanding me to make decisions, decisions that will nevertheless be mine and which I alone have to answer for" (GD 91).³⁸ A decision cannot be preempted because the call to responsibility that I take in the moment of decision is a singling out. *The moment of decision is the moment of responsibility.* One acts in this moment neither freely nor as if one were the author of the law. The responsibility expressed in the decision is not the expression of a correct outcome that could be calculated in advance in accordance with the law. Derrida does not positively outline this singular moment of decision; it is instead presented as something that can only be experienced as an aporia.

As we have seen, responsibility, like the dual character of the subject, has an essentially aporetic structure: the decision is mine; the decision makes me responsible; but the basis of that decision is the immediately singular, that is, something incommunicable. Responsibility is a duty without a norm.³⁹

The aporetic relation of singularity to responsibility could be understood as functioning in the way that justice does in relation to the law. In his essay "The Force of Law," justice is what the law serves, but of justice itself we can have no direct experience even though it is nevertheless exemplified in the proper functioning of law.⁴⁰ Justice, as with responsibility, is not something that can be constrained by the internal functioning of the application of laws; rather, the laws allow responsibility or justice only because they refer to something *that they themselves are not coincident with*, namely, justice or responsibility. Responsibility, like justice, is something unconditioned that shows itself adequately or inadequately in each moment of decision. It is this aporia that we experience in each decision.

Each time you replace one legal system by another, one law by another, or you improve the law, that is a kind of deconstruction, a critique and deconstruction. So, the law can be deconstructed and has to be deconstructed. That is the condition of historicity, revolution, morals, ethics, and progress. *But justice is not the law.* Justice is what gives us the impulse, the drive, or the movement to improve the law, that is, to deconstruct the law. . . . *Justice is not reducible to the law*, to a given system of legal structures. That means that justice is always unequal with itself.⁴¹

Conceiving justice to be beyond the law allows for the transformation of ethical communities. However, the border between justice and law does not cast the law adrift from some purely transcendent domain of justice. The criteria for determining the just are not to be found in law; rather, those criteria represent an inarticulate and changing "standard" by which such laws are to be judged if there is to be progress. Derrida ties responsibility to an unmediated singularity; consequently, ethical economies are open and fractured.

Derrida illustrates the aporia of responsibility through the biblical figure of Abraham. Abraham accepts a responsibility that is issued by God. His decision is not based on any knowledge or any morality; it is commanded by his faith, in secrecy and in absolute privacy. Abraham's responsibility to God is not based on any communicable reason. It is a responsibility that is

neither understandable nor publicly justifiable. Abraham's absolutely singular relation with God calls him to a responsibility that is forged in an "unintelligible language" (GD 74). It is a responsibility that renounces law, family, and society. Despite the severity and artificiality of Abraham's predicament, Derrida takes Abraham's responsibility to be paradigmatic of all responsibility. It is a responsibility whose absolute burden is singular and secretive and is not identical with the ethical (in Abraham's case the responsibility is in conflict with the ethical). The resolving and the acting that constitute the moment of decision are always in isolation from a norm and its authorization. In the moment of decision, there is something *uniquely mine* that is incommunicable. Abraham's decision itself cannot be directed by knowledge: "Such in fact is the paradoxical situation of every decision: it cannot be deduced from a form of knowledge of which it would simply be the effect, conclusion, or explication" (GD 77). Responsibility cannot be simply a link in a causal line of effects in which the decision is simply the correct application of a norm to a given situation.

Abraham's actions in isolation from every means of justification and ethicality have to be understood as those of a madman precisely because he cannot give reasons for his action. Madness, Derrida suggests, typifies all decisions because all decisions are unable to be subsumed under a universal. His appeal to the story of Abraham for the model of responsibility extends Levinas's view of responsibility, in which responsibility is never first for myself but always for another.⁴² All responsible decisions function in this way, as if called by something that is unknowable, something completely other. Abraham's singular responsibility is a singular decision and also a response to a command issued by a transcendent authority. The authority of God comes from a place in which one cannot be at home. The homelessness of God's call is not simply heteronymous; the singular responsibility that God's call elicits in the story of Abraham is messianic, and it has an *authority* that is not of the human order.

The messianic character of the call to responsibility sits uneasily with the quasi-transcendental status Derrida claims for this singularity, that is, that the singular is necessary for the proper functioning of all ethical systems. Derrida wants this heterogeneous and singularized responsibility to

be the condition for the transformation of the ethical. However, Abraham's responsibility does not function quasi-transcendentally; its singularity functions as an authority that is *entirely* outside the ethical. Abraham's sacrifice of his ethics, his family, and his culture is done at the command of God. The responsibility that God commands is not something of which one can have knowledge; it is rather the responsibility of Patočka's God, which Derrida describes in this way: "a supreme being, of God as one who, holding me from within and within his gaze, defines everything regarding me, and so rouses me to responsibility" (GD 31).

Abraham's call to responsibility by God creates an obligation that is singular and therefore secret since it is not communicable: "A secret doesn't belong, a secret can never be said to be at home or in its place [*chez soi*]" (GD 92). At the moment Abraham decides to kill his son he sacrifices everything by which he is at home in the world: love, family, community, law, and ethics. Because the singular and the secret cannot be at home, responsibility is a source of instability for the ethical economy. Singularity therefore represents the possibility of the transformation of ethics. But this instability is achieved at a price. The problem with Abraham's responsibility is that it has its authority in God. The pure singularity that God's call commands is completely divorced from the ethical and the social. It is not therefore an instability that might transform the ethical: his decision is just the act of a madman. Abraham's responsibility cannot transform the social because the other to which he responds is absolutely transcendent.

The singularity that Derrida appeals to represents an alternative economy that governs our relationship to others, a domain completely divorced from existing ethical and social relations. This view of singularity is in tension with the spirit of the core deconstructive notions such as *différance* and trace. Conceived in this way, singularity cannot be understood simply as an aporetic experience, that is, as a quasi-transcendental feature in the manner of the other core concepts of deconstruction such as *différance* and trace; rather, singularity assumes an *authority* of its own. The quasi-transcendental status of singularity and the responsibility commensurate with it present an alternative to the model of the autonomous subject—it allows for neither self-identity nor for the self to be at home with itself. Before examining the way in which Hegel's

thought deals with the model of responsibility and authority at issue in Derrida's thought, I will first examine Hegel's account of reason since this is central to understanding how he conceives autonomy and the authority of norms.

THE DESTABILIZING AND SKEPTICAL ROLE OF REASON IN HEGEL'S THOUGHT

In Derrida's view, the concept/intuition relation is a one-way street in which the rational subject transforms the intuitive into the conceptual and there is no residue of intuition left over.⁴³ This movement encapsulates for Derrida the metaphysics of presence: a philosophical program that excludes multiplicity, play, indeterminacy, and so on. Hegel, as Derrida remarks on numerous occasions, was attentive to difference, perhaps the most attentive figure in modern philosophy,⁴⁴ but ultimately that attentiveness to difference produced a system in which difference was artificially constrained in a conceptual schema. That dialectically constrained movement dissipates the very instability and play that animate difference. The idea of difference within Hegel's system is reduced to the expression of contradiction, and everything is placed within a hierarchical schema. Hegel's Logic, in this view, is philosophy's last great attempt to conceive the generative and transformative process that creates differences.⁴⁵ The stability inherent in the conceptual relations articulated by the dialectic cannot hope to capture the movement of thought and experience.

Whereas Hegel's dialectical system involves the constant process of creating and conflating oppositions, Derrida shows the instability of these oppositions. The core distinctions of thought are themselves unable to be neatly demarcated in the way that the traditional dualisms of philosophy carve up the world (active/passive, concept/intuition, nature/culture, and so on).⁴⁶ *Différance*, in contrast, does not belong to "the order of sensibility. But neither can it belong to intelligibility, to the ideality which is not fortuitously with the object of understanding" (M 5).

The conceptual architectonic of the philosophical tradition is established by banishing the play of differences. It presents a self-defined discursive

framework by “excluding from itself all multiplicity” (M 13). The limitations of this system are unable to be recognized by the system. *Différance*, by contrast, tries to capture the playfulness that is productive of differences while showing the limitations of programs, such as Hegel’s, that would try to express differences through a conceptual structure that would capture difference through the movement of contradictions. *Différance* has, as we have seen, a quasi-transcendental function;⁴⁷ at the same time it represents the limits of conceptuality.

Derrida’s approach mirrors a key feature of the traditional philosophical enterprise: it pushes categories of thought and claims to truth to the point at which their explanations are inadequate. Derrida is interested in the play of forces that is constitutive of language systems and indeed all meaning systems. He thinks that the philosophical tradition is unable to conceive this process of difference creation from within the strictures of its own conceptual schema. This is not straightforwardly something that can be conceptually mapped, since the instability that propels these systems and transforms them precludes any stable view of them (or of the subject or the whole that are its effects). Subject, whole, and the very movement that transforms how we understand these things could not be mapped and rendered transparent—that was Hegel’s mistake.

Hegel’s thought, at least in part, can be conceived as motivated by a similar concern to Derrida’s: expressing the instability in human experience. In Hegel’s case, that instability and movement motivates thought to redetermine itself, that is, to change its self-understanding. The limitation of thought is that there can be nothing beyond the Concept or the “space of reasons” that could have an explanatory potential. Nevertheless, Hegel’s presentation of the Concept and the dialectic is such that there is, as we have seen, a persistent tension between concept and intuition, as well as between reason and the understanding. There is no empirical given external to the Concept that can be appealed to as a reality that is independently capable of authorizing truth. Hegel tries to conceive of the logical, historical, and social structures that allow us to understand ourselves in the way that we do. Nevertheless, he needs to keep that system open so that reason, which is forever searching for a better self-understanding, has a constant and evolving pool of determinations that it

can draw on to correct insufficiencies in its self-understanding. This instability is inscribed in the self-transcending character of the Hegelian subject.

In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the pathway of doubt that the text's protagonist, the natural consciousness, travels down is a process of self-appraisal or self-correction. As we have already seen, each shape of knowing that is articulated as the text unfolds presents a form of knowledge that it considers absolute. It tries to hold on to its truth, first as sense-certainty, then as perception, a supersensible reality, and abstract reason, eventually culminating in absolute knowing. What characterizes all of these claims, other than absolute knowing, is that they are limited and inadequate. The various claims to know, which each of the shapes of spirit express, collapse and are pushed ahead by a *suspicion* that each description of consciousness's knowledge of the world is inadequate: "even if it wants to remain in an unthinking lethargy, thought spoils thoughtlessness, and its unrest disturbs that lethargy" (PhS §80/GW9 63). That suspicion or dissatisfaction with its own claims to know is its thinking or more precisely its rationality. This is the negative function of reason, but it has a positive function as well.

Essential to the movement of the dialectic is an aspiration for the unconditioned. Hegel, as a good dialectician, does not abandon Kant's reasons for asserting the thing-in-itself as the limit of cognition. On the one hand, cognition is necessarily conditioned and, on the other hand, reason aspires to the unconditioned. Hegel appropriates the tension between these two aspects of cognition to provide the momentum for his dialectic. The understanding seeks the unconditioned, but its claims are subjected to reasons that require it be constantly checked against its own claims to absoluteness. The unconditioned should not, however, be considered a self-subsistent ontology. The succession of claims to absoluteness that characterize the movement of Hegel's *Logic* and the *Phenomenology* is attributable only to the understanding (*Verstand*) that aspires to hold on to an absolute truth or a fixed identity. Reason, in contrast, is dissatisfied with the understanding's claims to absoluteness and is able to recognize the insufficiencies in the claims made. Reason recognizes the limitations of the reasons given for a particular claim. Reason's recognition of this is how the claim collapses. Reason recognizes the determinate extremes that emerge as a result of the understanding's rigid

adherence to a particular truth claim. It also recognizes that this contradiction cannot be resolved from within the normative parameters immanent to the specific shape of spirit from which the contradiction emerges.

This movement is at the heart of thought's and the subject's self-correcting journey in the *Phenomenology*. However, thought's forward movement cannot be explained by reason's skeptical attitude. Reason does have a positive role. Reason recognizes that the claims to absoluteness made by the understanding are not self-standing. The claims of the understanding always break down because they cannot meet the criterion of absoluteness.⁴⁸ The introduction to the *Phenomenology* argues that this movement is initiated because thought is unsettled. As we saw in chapter 3, what causes thought to be unsettled is that its experience is mediated by factors that are beyond what the natural consciousness or a shape of spirit *explicitly* takes to be a determination of itself. Natural consciousness is finite, but its thought is not; it has determinations that are both explicit and implicit. The determinations of thought and the conditions underlying and allowing experience are not just what we explicitly affirm in our social relations and commitments. Thinking and experience are shaped by "pre-understandings" or implicit determinations that are not explicitly affirmed. These might be understood as norms that are neither legitimated nor articulated, but that still function as reasons to act. These are concepts and determinations implicitly underwriting the ideas behind our judgments. This explanation has its origins in the way Hegel sought to correct the concept/intuition dualism.

Hegel preserves some sense of the intuitive, though an intuition stripped of its pure receptivity. Intuition, while not delivering the world to us unmediated, does nevertheless express nondiscursively the complex web of affects, mediations, and determinations that are constitutive of experience *and* that are bound to concepts but that are *not* reducible to them. These intuitions are at play in our basic judgments; even though they are not concepts, they cannot be conceived in purely receptive terms. The point here is that if Hegel collapses the receptivity/spontaneity distinction, then while intuition cannot legitimate a particular claim or judgment, it is nevertheless instrumental in guiding the way in which those claims come to be articulated as concepts, since it prefigures those concepts in a nondiscursive form.

The path of the *Phenomenology* is the struggle to make this “second-nature *Bildung*” explicit.⁴⁹ For self-understanding to be transformed, thought must appeal to some domain other than what is explicitly authorized to be the norms governing its self-understanding. The natural consciousness must be able to formulate new concepts if spirit is to continue on its self-correcting journey. If Hegel’s project can no longer viably be taken to be a monistic spirit or to be strongly metaphysical, then the resources for thought’s transformation cannot reside in a fixed spiritual substance. Hegel preserves the intuitive in the concept, such that intuitions are not passively delivered content but are more adequately conceived as the background determinations of our judgments. Intuitions and concepts together are, to paraphrase another concept from McDowell, “second-nature *Bildung*.” One way of understanding at least part of intuition’s role is to think of it as representing norms that we are *not* discursively committed to.

To return to our concern—the positive role of reason. The various claims to truth in the *Phenomenology* collapse because reason is both intuitive and conceptual. This allows reason to be skeptical of the truth claims articulated by the natural consciousness precisely because its understanding is *already* more developed than the limited claims of each successive shape of spirit. It is this dual function of reason—to show the limits of a shape of life and to be already implicitly ahead of each shape—that ensures Hegel’s self-determining spirit is essentially open and self-transforming. This is very different from the way Derrida thinks the whole moves and transforms itself. As will be discussed in the final section, this difference comes out most clearly in the way they conceive responsibility and singularity. But before examining this, I want first to bring together Hegel’s and Derrida’s respective views of subjectivity.

HEGEL’S TRANSFORMATION OF THE MODERN SUBJECT

Comparing Derrida’s and Hegel’s respective accounts of subjectivity is a challenging enterprise, particularly because so much of Derrida’s influential

interpretation is developed under the sway of Heidegger's idiosyncratic analysis of Western metaphysics. Derrida's distorted reading of Hegel does not, of course, call into question the distinctiveness and importance of his project. If, as I have shown, Heidegger's interpretation of Hegel is problematic, then this calls for a reexamination of Derrida's interpretation of Hegel's subject. This will require revisiting Hegel's notion of subjectivity. The issue of concern here is whether the reconceived subject/object relation that was described in chapter 3 can be understood, as Derrida has presented it above, as governed by an all-consuming *aufhebung* and a self-present subject.

Derrida's account of Hegelian subjectivity appears at first sight plausible, if Hegel resolves the mind/world dualism by establishing an expanded subject who is identical with the whole. The traditional metaphysical account of Hegel's project deserves the critique of it offered by Heidegger and Derrida. This robustly metaphysical Hegel resolves the mind/world dualism by presenting the world as the expression of a cosmic spirit progressively realizing itself in history. The broad claim here is that Hegel resolves the residual problems in Kant's thought by regressing to a precritical monistic spirit. On this view, the progression of the *Phenomenology* involves the realization that spirit determines the world; at the same time self-consciousness recognizes itself as an expression of spirit. Spirit is thereby an expanded version of self-consciousness. This metaphysical subject (which chapter 3 attempted to dispel), while it might correct the mind/world dualism in Kant and the limitations of Fichte's self-positing subject, creates many more problems than it answers. Such an implausible notion deserves Derrida's criticisms. However, Derrida's interpretation of Hegel's subject fails to acknowledge the import of resolving the concept/intuition distinction and Hegel's own critique of Fichte's self-identical subject. Hegel's subject and the negativity associated with it must be conceived as a correction to Kant's mind/world dualism and the subjectivism of Fichte's and Kant's metaphysics.

As we saw in chapter 3, Hegel considered the Kantian categories that are constitutive of human experience (the constitutive categories that allow and form subjective experience of the world) to be subjective. The categories are not determinative of the object, only its phenomenal appearance. The unity of the object is something presumed, a combination of categories tied

to the apperceptive character of the subject but not essential to the object in itself. This preserves the truth of the object, the way in which it is in itself, as a beyond to which finite subjects could have no objective knowledge because the posited "objecthood" belongs only to thinking and not to the object. This approach makes thought entirely subjective. The categories are, as Hegel describes them in the introduction to the *Phenomenology*, thereby purely instruments that one employs to comprehend objects but that remain separate from the objects they would seek to explain. Separating thought from the object in this way restricts its explanatory power to the subjective. Kant cannot secure the objectivity of the categories because thought cannot be considered, on these terms, to be self-grounding, since its determination is entirely self-referential and has no necessary relation to that which they would seek to explain. We are left thereby with mind cut off from world. On the one hand, objects of experience cannot be claimed to be true since the truth is purely in subjectively derived categories; and on the other hand, the categories, because they are subjective, have no necessary relation to the world.

Hegel, as has previously been discussed, thinks apperception can bridge the rigid opposition of subject and object that the Kantian account of the relation of concept and intuition seems to result in. For Hegel the object is not separable from its conception. This does not mean that an object is arbitrarily determined by consciousness, but simply that the object cannot be considered to be in any sense other than how it is thought. Sensibility, which assumes some given nondiscursive way in which the world is, has no role to play in Hegel's thought. This is the lesson of the opening chapter of the *Phenomenology*. The conceptuality that is constitutive of self-consciousness, thought, and experience overarches the subject/object relation.

Fichte's self-positing subject is also an attempt to correct the dualism of concept and intuition and to overcome the problem of the thing-in-itself. Fichte also thought the critical project could only be realized by demonstrating that knowledge was not given its content passively through sensibility. His subject was active in the determination of the intuitive component of knowledge. As we saw in chapter 2, his subject strives against the constraint of the not-I. Consciousness confronts the limits of its inadequate

explanations of the objects of experience, limits that it constantly seeks to overcome. This self-positing subject (which posits and redefines its knowledge in confrontation with an indeterminate constraint) re-creates another version of the very mind/world dualism that Fichte sought to overcome. The model Fichte puts forward to correct this is an irreconcilable dualism of I and not-I.

Hegel is concerned to overcome the subject/object dualism that Kant's and Fichte's systems seem to conclude with. His response is to conceive self-consciousness such that, rather than confronting an alien world, it sees itself in that world. Hegelian self-consciousness does not stand over and against an object domain. The content of experience is not separable from the conditions and categories that render those objects meaningful. The truth of objects is the concept of them, and those concepts cannot be seen as being purely subjective or as having a transcendental or naturalistic origin. The way Hegel shows this is an extraordinarily complex process that is only disclosed through the entire unfolding of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The issue that is of concern here is whether the reconceived subject/object relation can be understood as Derrida has described it: as governed by an all-consuming *dialectic* with a self-present subject standing at the center.

There is a more productive way to understand the subject of the *Phenomenology*, a subject that it takes the entire work to describe. In that work, Hegel makes little mention of the physiological and anthropological basis for self-consciousness, though this is dealt with extensively in his analysis of subjective spirit in the *Encyclopedia*. Self-consciousness cannot be conceived as a faculty of mind; Hegel eschews such bald naturalizations as the basis of explaining human mindedness. Part of the reason that the *Phenomenology* articulates the structure of self-consciousness only over the course of the whole work is because he thinks that approaches such as Kant's, which attempted to present the subject antecedent to the inquiry, are problematic. It (as with all the core concepts of Hegel's thought) is not something we can understand, as Hegel often remarks, before undertaking the hard work of science. In Hegel's case the subject is more adequately conceived as a *result*, or as Robert Pippin describes it, a "historical achievement."⁵⁰

Hegel's examination of the subject varies depending on the text one examines. The subject of the *Philosophy of Right* is a subject that is transformed through a succession of attempts to realize freedom. In the *Phenomenology* the self-understanding of the natural consciousness is progressively changed through a succession of attempts to account for the objects of its experience, which range from a singular object to religion. In these two works, the subject cannot be examined independently of the determinate unfolding of those texts. The subject described is in both cases inseparable from the complex determination of historical and social forces. The form of self-relation of the subject is inscribed within those social and historical conditions, conditions that are in transition and that could never thereby be known in any comprehensive manner.

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* opens with the natural consciousness making a series of truth claims about the object or its own knowledge. The introduction describes the method by which the various truth claims are undermined and transformed into more adequate claims. "Experience" is the broad term he gives for this process. The text has more than simply epistemic concerns. The natural consciousness's examination of the objects of experience and its various claims to know is a self-examination, which is in turn the self-comprehension of spirit. This process of self-comprehension is driven by a distinctive feature of Hegel's subject—the negative. The relation between negativity and subjectivity is described in some of the most often cited passages of the *Phenomenology*:⁵¹ "Since the concept is the object's own self, that is, the self which exhibits itself as the *object's coming-to-be*, it is not a motionless subject passively supporting the accidents; rather it is, the self-moving concept which takes its determinations back into itself" (PhS §60/GW9 45). The negative provides spirit and the subject with their essential dynamism and is the condition for their ongoing transformation. This passage connects with an earlier section of the preface where Hegel remarks: "The non-selfsameness which takes place in consciousness between the I and the substance which is its object is their distinction, the *negative* itself. It can be viewed as the defect of the two, but it is their very soul, that is, is what moves them. . . . This negative [is] the self" (PhS §37/GW9 28–9).⁵² This passage is followed by

one of the most well-known in Hegel's thought: "substance shows that it is essentially subject" (PhS §37/GW9 29).

Derrida summarizes this process in the following way: "the movement of lost presence sets in motion the process of re-appropriation" (M 72). This description appears to be an appropriate assessment of the negative, since the process of experience that the text describes is one in which the determinate character of spirit demonstrates its identity with the whole. Difference would thereby be nothing other than determined moments of the whole. Hegel, on this account, substitutes the self-sufficiency of the cogito with a self-sufficient spirit. Derrida contests the idea of self-sufficiency and the image of home; thus, he establishes quasi-transcendental conditions for the necessary transcendence of all systems of thought. The way Derrida conceives singularity, for example, as something outside the economy of determinate systems; it is not something one can possess or be at home in; it resists stability and reconciliation.

Hegel's negative does not seek to reclaim a primordial loss, but is rather better conceived as the means by which we come to realize that the way in which the world is meaningful has to be understood as self-determined. The negative of which Hegel speaks is primarily concerned with how norms become untimely, contradictory, and inadequate. Through this dislocating process, the subject develops an understanding of the discursive horizon in which it exists. It comes to understand why it conceives itself and the world in the specific way that it does. As the *Phenomenology* unfolds, the subject discloses the collectively produced discursive order that allows it to judge, offer reasons, and make normative claims.⁵³ Moreover, it understands the interpretative limits of this discursive horizon, namely, that there is no order to which we could appeal to understand the world other than this.

Descartes is often presented as inaugurating modernity by grounding thought in self-consciousness. Hegel is a great admirer of that strategy; however, his project takes a different path. In Hegel's case, the grounding of thought, unlike the foundational cogito, is demonstrated by establishing that thought is self-transforming. The concepts and categories of experience must be considered, as we have already seen, as social and historical achievements. Hegel's subject is not a transcendental subject. The *Phenomenology*

demonstrates that conceptions of the subject and human intersubjectivity are the result of progressive changes in human self-understanding. The *Phenomenology's* succession of inadequate attempts at self-understanding does not describe *isolated* failures of understanding, but through the negative it discloses the complex discursive terrain of self-consciousness. There is no fixed, self-certain, and self-identical subject. The subject is not identifiable other than through and *as* these historically transformed concepts.

There are sections of the *Phenomenology* where absolute claims to *individual* self-determination are presented as the exclusive truth of self and world. The most well-known is the section on the struggle of master and servant, though the discussion of conscience in the same chapter is similarly self-assertive. These forms of self-consciousness are extreme claims to self-certainty that ultimately undermine themselves. Both of these attempts to ground all meaning in individual self-certainty show themselves to be unviable forms of self-relation. The *Phenomenology* progresses to more adequate accounts of self-consciousness through the successive undermining of claims to know. The motor of this undermining and transforming is the negative. The labor of the negative does not reveal a fixed and given whole. Instead, what the text shows is inadequate forms of self-understanding. Reason's dissatisfaction with these leads to progressive changes in human self-understanding. What is displayed therefore are progressive changes in what humans collectively authorize as legitimate ways of understanding the world. This characterization makes the process sound a bit too neat. In reality the flux of inadequate self-understandings and the forces that change them into adequate ones only appear as determinate and defining from the distance of philosophical reflection.⁵⁴

There are three key aspects to the way the text develops. First, as has already been discussed, the experience of the natural consciousness is self-correcting. It builds an increasingly adequate account of its own knowledge as the text unfolds. Second, these transformations of its knowledge and self-understanding are inscribed in its self-consciousness.⁵⁵ Third, the subject recognizes that the categories and conditions that underlie and orient its experience of the world, that is, provide the interpretative parameters for all its judgments, are the result of collective human self-determination.

The *Phenomenology* shows the complex ways in which spirit should be understood to be self-producing. This self-production is not the unfolding of a cosmic spirit but rather should be conceived as collective changes in human self-understanding. The dialectical movement of the *Phenomenology* charts these transformations. While there is an artificiality to the claims to necessity for each transformation, the subject of the *Phenomenology*, as was discussed in chapter 3, nevertheless comes to understand itself in terms of those determinations. Hegel's criticism of Kant's rigid separation of sensibility and understanding forms the background for this; it is his desire to correct this dualism that motivates him to reject any conception of a transcendent realm of truth or objectivity. All the conditions and categories of human meaningfulness are necessarily determined collectively, and those conditions are the elemental features of human self-consciousness. The subject progressively understands these conditions to be its self-consciousness. This requires it to recognize the character of its subjectivity not as a singular self-identical subject, but rather as the product of the complex forces at play in nature, history, and society. It recognizes that these conditions are inscribed in the very way it is aware of itself and the world. In so doing, it understands its own essentially self-transcending character.

The subject's experience is an excursion into the set of relations that underwrite its own thinking. These relations are not coincident with the subject but mirror the manifold of norms and reasons (the space of reasons) at play in any social-historical milieu. These conditions cannot be mapped transparently and immediately onto the subject. Hegel's subject is *not* self-identical and self-present in the way Derrida conceives it, precisely because, as we have seen, the norms, concepts, and conditions that mediate the subject's relation to itself and the world are always more than can be conceptually circumscribed at any given point in time. The "space of reasons" is always in transition and is ahead of what a finite subject could know. In this sense the subject is always already ahead of itself, though its comprehension is only ever retrospective.

The difference between Hegel and Derrida is not in their alternative visions of subjectivity but in the philosophical and sociopolitical context in which these subjects are conceived. Modern life provides, on Hegel's view,

the best conditions in which the kind of unsettled subject that we have seen in both Derrida and Hegel can be at home with itself. This unsettled subject finds in the institutions of modern civil society the objective expression of its own instability. It recognizes itself in the dynamic institutions of modern life. The comprehension of the subject's essential instability is possible in modernity because collective self-production, self-transformation, change, and instability are *explicit* in the very idea of modern life as well as in its institutions. This in turn provides the optimal conditions for the ongoing transformations of our self-understanding, that is, it allows for the continual revision of habituated reasons and norms. This constant transformation does not, as with premodern societies, cause the collapse of the social order, since the very idea of self-transformation is now the essential principle of modern society.⁵⁶

At the philosophical level, Derrida is right to claim that Hegel's dialectic attempts to capture and harness the instability at the heart of modern life, but what Derrida fails to realize is that the dialectic is an attempt to give philosophy a philosophical form that is adequate to the dynamism of modern life. This does not fix reality in any weighty metaphysical sense but simply tries to give an adequate philosophical expression of modern life. Such a project is not different from Derrida's own project, in the sense that *différance* and the very specific philosophical form that he adopts try to give form to a world that has lived the limits of modernity.⁵⁷ In Hegel's case, philosophical comprehension and the reconciliation it effects are transient because our comprehension is marked by a discord between, on the one hand, our current understanding of ourselves, which is a retrospective reconstruction of the set of conceptual relations that have forged our present self-understanding, and, on the other hand, the fact that there is *implicit* (*an sich*) in our experience of ourselves and our culture the next shape of life that spirit is developing. That is, our self-understanding is being transformed by the totality of determinations that make up the world, determinations that are of necessity in transition to new expressions of spirit. The distinctive feature of philosophy is not necessarily the specific shape of life it expresses but the motivation for its attempted self-comprehension. Philosophy is not just a desire for self-understanding, but more fundamentally

it strives to comprehend the gap between explicit self-understanding and the implicit “intuitive content” that is *already* leaving a shape of life and its “reasons” behind. The job of philosophy is to close this gap. The cue for this philosophical examination emerges when a determinate mode of life has become in some sense indeterminate, when the reasons animating a culture have become stale, that is, when the authority of the values and customs no longer has an unquestioned hold on its citizens. This precisely is what the idiosyncratic notion of experience that Hegel describes in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* is meant to capture.

SINGULARITY AND RESPONSIBILITY IN DERRIDA AND HEGEL

In his discussion of responsibility Derrida, as we have seen, describes the finite and exclusive character of ethical systems. Ethical systems cannot be equivalent with the just since they are always maintained through the exclusion of something other: women, minorities, the environment, animals, and so on. The capacity of ethical systems to transform themselves is limited to determinations internal to those systems. The notion of singularity, as Derrida conceives it, enables those finite patterns of exchange to disrupt their circumscribed fields of operation by allowing responses to something other than determinations internal to those systems. For example, most ethical economies, even if they claim to be governed by notions of equality or universal human rights, are incapable of justifying a genuine responsibility for animals through any resources internal to those systems. The possibility of responding to an animal (to be responsible) cannot be envisaged by ethical communities without effecting a wholesale transformation of those communities and the economic systems governing them. Derrida, as we have seen, is concerned to establish something inexhaustibly other to such systems, an other that would provide the basis for responsibility, which in turn facilitates the transformation of any closed meaning system.

Hegel's thought, as Derrida sees it, with its aspiration to recognition and reconciliation is too inflexible in its approach to difference. Reconciliation can be achieved only if the negative appropriates all otherness into the dialectical movement of the Concept. Hegel's thought is a bounded system of mediated conceptual determinations. In contrast Derrida's thought posits an "inexhaustible singularization."⁵⁸ Derrida's claim that Hegel's dialectic does violence to the singular is justified. As we have seen, in order to think the singular, language and conceptuality have to be mediated and this entails the violation of the absolutely singular. But this conceptual mediation and the violence that is the consequence of this are for Hegel just an inescapable feature of language. Derrida makes the same claim in the *Gift of Death*: once we speak, the singular is necessarily made general (GD 60). The necessarily mediated character of concepts and language is established from the very outset of the *Phenomenology*. The way singularity is articulated in the *Gift of Death* emphasizes its secrecy and exclusivity. However, once expressed in these terms, the permeability of the exchange between the singular and the ethical is difficult to sustain. As we have seen, what the responsible singular decision requires is precisely the "sacrificing of ethics" (GD 68). Such a sacrifice is possible because Derrida positions the singular as secret, exclusive, and transcendent; but in so doing, the ethical is cut off from the singular. And with this separation, as we will see, the possibility for the transformation of the ethical is also jettisoned.

In contrast to Derrida, Hegel does not try to present a domain in which singularity can be presented, that is, in secret. He argues that singularity cannot be conceived outside the space of reasons. Hegel's Concept does not represent transparent exchangeable conceptual determinations, that is, it is not reducible to the giving and asking for reasons. It is an intuitive-discursive domain, which is conceived to disallow the possibility of an explanatory domain that could be other to the space of reasons, but it is also a space in which the potentiality for its own transformation is internal to the whole.⁵⁹ The systemic problems in Kant's division between intuition and concept meant that Hegel could not grant a determining, transcendental, or quasi-transcendental role to something *outside* the space of reasons. To do so would grant the basis for the revisability of norms to something other

to thought. Despite this, Hegel is sensitive to the idea that there needs to be a porous relation between the discursive and the nondiscursive, without which the concept/intuition dichotomy would remain a dualism.

The way Hegel resolves the concept/intuition dualism is twofold. First, he argues that there is nothing with an explanatory potential beyond the space of reasons. The concepts underlying all experience are necessarily normative and mediated. Second, he describes how things come to be normative (this is most explicitly articulated in the *Phenomenology*), that is, how we come to consider things as providing an authoritative basis for judgment and action.⁶⁰ Hegel views the Concept, which is arguably analogous to the space of reasons, to be the result of a complex process of social mediations that is articulated at great length in the unfolding of the *Phenomenology*. There can be no basis for judgment by appealing to something beyond the whole, beyond the socially and historically constituted space of reasons. Meaning cannot be conferred singularly, privately, or by an individual outside or beyond these socially mediated relations. The reasons we give to others for our actions, and the reasons we take to be authoritative, must be in principle revisable. The revisability of norms, or reason's capacity for self-correction, is undermined if the authority for judgment can be found in an *essential nature* or in an *immediately singular* call to responsibility.

This brings us to the second point raised in the previous paragraph. The story of how things come to be normative must give an account of what allows this transformation, that is, of the way in which the basis of our judgments is revised and changed. Explaining the transformations of what is taken to be authoritative requires an account of the potentiality that allows for the transformation. For Hegel, if we are not to reintroduce a dualism of mindedness and something other to it, then the way in which the conceptual determinations underlying our judgment can be transformed (corrected, improved, or revised) must allow their appeal to something *beyond what is explicitly authorized as normative*. Derrida puts this situation well: "What puts thinking into operation exceeds its own borders or what thinking itself intends to present of these borders. The work exceeds itself, it surpasses the limits of the concept of itself that it claims to have properly while presenting itself."⁶¹

In Hegel's case, as we saw above, whatever allows for thought to transform itself cannot be conceived as wholly other to the discursive. While Hegel argues there are limits to discursivity, the issue that concerns him is that we cannot give this domain an explanatory potential. If he is to avoid reinstalling a given, then the space of reasons (the Concept) has to be understood to be self-determined. As we saw in the discussion of Hegel's resolution of the concept/intuition dualism, Hegel preserves intuition because it provides the potential for conceptuality to transform itself, but, unlike in Kant, intuition has to be understood to be within the space of reasons. And this finally brings us back to Derrida's strategy for thought's transformation of itself.

Derrida's singular responsibility, even though it operates in secret, gives an explanatory role to something outside the Concept or the space of reasons. Once Derrida gives the singular that status, a dualism of mindedness and something other to it is reinstalled and with it the very problem that dogged Kant's concept/intuition distinction. Derrida is aware of this problem, which is why *différance* is conceived as quasi-transcendental. In spite of this awareness, his examination of responsibility presents singularity as authoritative and explanatory. By radically separating the singular from ethics, Derrida is concerned to provide the potential for the space of reasons to transform itself. But this is simply not possible once a *discursive* status is given to a singularity that is absolutely immediate. Once it is cut off from the space of reasons, then the capacity for that system (the Concept and the space of reasons) to transform itself is relinquished, since the justification for the responsibility is not made by attempting to give reasons but by a messianic declaration. The singular responsibility is a reason to act that is wholly other to human sociality. Derrida authorizes the singular to show the limitations of finite ethical systems, but it is also the autonomous subject that is being questioned since the responsibility at play in Derrida's thought is in no sense something that could be considered self-legislated.

Hegel argues that no reasons (nothing authoritative) can issue from the singular. Reason's capacity for self-correction cannot be sustained if the grounds for any such judgment are posited in an essential nature or the immediately singular. To appeal to something wholly other as the legitimate

basis for judgment invests that singularity with a capacity to make sense of the world. For Hegel, we have to attempt to translate the intuitive into the conceptual through discursive engagements with others. This will be limited because intuitions will always be inadequately thought as concept, but for the reasons I have outlined above they cannot be conceived as other to the Concept. If we see these intuitions as in some sense self-determined, then they are *potential* reasons that we can be discursively committed to, if not now then at least at some point in the future. Intuitions can thereby be understood as reasons that have emerged through the complex interweavings of human sociality but that are not yet explicit. They are, in Hegel's language, in itself and not for itself.

In this context, let us again examine Derrida's example of the animal that summons him to responsibility. For Hegel this represents not the demand to think it singularly, but to see why the existing ethical system is so irrational that the claim to grant justice to the animal is not possible within the existing ethical framework. We are not relieved thereby of the responsibility to make reasons that can in fact be recognized as such publicly. What we are relieved of is trying to capture singularity as the basis for any such responsibility because the singular cannot count as a reason for any such responsibility or commitment. Moreover, once that authority has its origin in a domain that is not self-determined, as in Derrida's case with the singular or the Abrahamic tale, then we are no longer required to undertake this process of "making sense" of this intuition, that is, of treating the intuitions as reasons that we are not yet discursively committed to. Because the authority that is invested in the singular is wholly other, its potentiality to transform the basis of judgment is also lost.

What I have been concerned to show is that both Derrida and Hegel wish to give thought the resources to be open and transformative. Hegel does this by preserving intuition (though one stripped of its association with the given) and a perpetually dissatisfied reason. Derrida by contrast looks to the unmediated singular and a quasi-transcendental *différance*. Derrida's approach does *not* seek to dichotomize the singular and thought. Singularity is the possibility for any system of thinking to transform itself. The difference between Hegel and Derrida is not that one accepts

difference and the other denies it; rather, it lies in the way they articulate their respective explanations of thinking. Hegel is concerned with a reconstructive enterprise—how we have come to understand ourselves in the way that we do. From this point of view, that is, retrospectively, the contingencies of experience become determinate insufficiencies in the development of the Concept or spirit. That this development keeps moving is because thought is always more than what is *explicitly* affirmed in our normative commitments. Because it is intuitive, thought can come to see the inadequacies and tensions in its commitments and in the concepts that underlie our judgments. It is this capacity of thought, to be in a sense more than itself, to be noncoincident, that ensures the instability inherent in experience. Where Hegel parts company with Derrida is that he wants to make these implicit “determinations” explicit by drawing them into or appropriating them into our intersubjective relations (though it always does this inadequately since intuition is not equivalent to conceptuality). Hegel puts the transforming power in the negative and intuition, which are not other to thought. Derrida, in contrast, places the resources for thought’s transformation in an unrecoverable quasi-transcendental. In the call to responsibility, Derrida places the singular not just in a quasi-transcendental relation to ethical life, but rather completely outside this sphere. In so doing, he places it in a dichotomous relation to the reasons that come to be formulated in the to and fro of public discourse. The singular is not able to provide the resources for the transformation of this sphere since it is wholly other to our collective sense-making practices.

6

THE DIALECTIC AND TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICISM

Deleuze's Critique of Hegel

THE SCIENTIFIC RIGOR of modern philosophy reconfigured the self-world relation in a manner that for the most part made the knowing subject the arbiter of everything earthly. In the idealized narrative of modernity this inverted copernicanism is presented as a revolution, indeed the greatest revolution in human history, since it liberated humanity from all forms of dogmatism. If the center of the universe and all meaning determination has shifted from God to a “finite synthetic self,” who now assumes all these attributes, then, Deleuze argues, the Enlightenment’s disenchantment of the world was not a radical change in understanding from premodern philosophy.¹ The fulfillment of the ideals of the Enlightenment, which had promised to reconceive our relation to existence by dethroning God and traditional authority, requires a similar dethroning of the modern subject.

If we are to find a philosophical program adequate to existence, then we need to be cognizant of the limits of modern philosophy’s ability to achieve this task. In making those limits apparent, Deleuze continues the critical tradition of examining presuppositions. It is the presuppositions of modern philosophy, its unacknowledged dogmatism, that have constrained thought and philosophy. Deleuze’s characterization of the philosophical tradition as pursuing a “dogmatic image of thought” captures a set of methodological presuppositions of modern philosophy. These presuppositions (representation,

good sense, common sense, the good will, dialectic, idealist conceptual schemas) are all employed as controlling forces by which the philosophical tradition imposes its own conceptions of order on the world and thought.² These and other dogmatic images of thought distort thought.

These distorting images are grounded in the most damaging of all the distortions—the cogito: “These postulates culminate in the position of an identical thinking subject, which functions as a principle of identity for concepts in general.”³ The transcendental subject that coordinates the faculties subsumes being with its conceptual schemas and grounds. It constrains all thought through its representations, and its recognitive determination of being makes “difference in thought disappear.”⁴ Against this view, Deleuze argues that thought is not under the control of the subject. These postulates are simply illusions and presuppositions that have taken rhetorical hold of thought. While the dogmatic image of thought and its attendant self-identical subject range across the entire history of philosophy from Descartes to Kant, it is Hegel’s thought above all that takes this illusion to its extreme point.

Deleuze’s analysis of Hegel, especially in *Difference and Repetition* and *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, is critical of three closely related concepts: self-consciousness, which he sees as a stagnant self-producing subject; the dialectic, a methodology for a philosophical program that cannot think difference other than as contradiction; and recognition, a form of judgment that is fundamentally conservative since it can only think in terms of established structures of identity. Deleuze’s response to the limitation of modern philosophy is to shift the modern subject from its radial point by redirecting ontology from man to a univocal being. (Deleuze describes this univocal being as transcendental difference.) The subject is shifted by placing the source of concept creation not in the subject, but in the empirical, which he conceives as a domain of “intensities” and “individuations” that operate outside of the universalizing patterns of representational thinking.

A central concern of this chapter is with the notion of individuation on which Deleuze bases his alternative consideration of subjectivity. Whereas the fundamental limitation of thought for Hegel is that it cannot think the singular, in Deleuze’s case the transcendental landscape can be reconstructed by extricating the singular from any dialectical and negative formulation of it.

This cleansing of the singular from any Hegelian contamination underwrites the notion of individuation and the conception of subjectivity that proceed from it. What I will argue here, however, is that Deleuze and Hegel proceed from very different assumptions about the nature of thinking and conceptuality to nevertheless posit models of subjectivity that are both antireflective, self-transcending, and decentered. Hegel criticizes the model of subjectivity that presents it as a unified and transparent self-relation. Hegel has a self-determining subject at the center of his project, but that subject cannot be understood as straightforwardly stagnant, as self-identical, or as self-knowing.

SENSE-EXPERIENCE AND INDIVIDUATION

The diverging paths that Deleuze and Hegel take in their respective examinations of selfhood, subjectivity, and self-consciousness can be neatly illustrated by the opening discussion of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In “Sense-Certainty” (the first chapter) a singular object is examined in its immediacy. A knowledge claim is put forward that is intended to capture the truth of the object in its totality. The concepts initially proposed to capture the truth of sense-experience are a variety of indexicals—“this,” “here,” and “now.” However, they do not capture the object of experience in its immediacy nor can they provide the requisite certainty. “Sense-Certainty” proposes the immediate experience of an object as the truth of its knowing. It has before it an immediate object that it claims to know with certainty through direct sensory experience, but as soon as it offers any description of the object with a view to capturing its putative immediacy—even a term as minimal as “This”—it utters a universal. As Hegel remarks: “language merely expresses this truth, it is in that way, not possible at all that we could say what we mean about sensuous being” (PhS §97/GW9 72). Clearly, therefore, the natural consciousness’s desire to find a concept adequate to what it proposes to be the immediacy of sensory experience cannot be met.

Hegel argues that the distinguishing feature of the sensory experience of an object is singularity (*Einzelnheit*). Deleuze makes a very similar

argument; however, Hegel does not think that the singularity of experience can be conceptualized, since the attempt to describe or make a claim to know an object must in some way—even if one is only using “this, here, now”—appeal to universals. Hegel puts it like this: “What I only *mean*, is *mine*, belonging to me as this particular individual. If, however, language expresses only what is universal, then I cannot say what I *mean* only. And the *ineffable*, feeling, sentiment are not what is most exquisite and true, but instead the most insignificant and true” (EnL §20r). By claiming that language is necessarily mediated and that it can only express things in their universality, Hegel is not thereby rejecting the immediacy of sense-experience. What he is dismissing is the idea that there is a given reality to which one could appeal in order to *independently* validate judgments and representations.

The journey of the *Phenomenology*’s philosophical protagonist, the natural consciousness, from sense-certainty to absolute knowing is described as “the path of despair” (PhS §78/GW9 61). This is an unusual way to characterize a philosophical treatise. Despite the density and intricacy of Hegel’s abstract and complex prose, this text captures a distinct type of experience. “The path of despair” entails the collapse of various claims to know and their corresponding shapes of spirit. The opening transition, in which the natural consciousness moves from its immersion in what it takes to be a purely sensuous knowing to increasingly more complex shapes of knowing, is marked by a loss of unity that it will never regain and by its failure to discursively capture an immediate object. Nowhere in the text is the singularity of an immediate object presented in a way that could be said to be adequate to it. This, of course, does not mean that Hegel failed in an essential part of the project of the *Phenomenology*. One of the lessons of “Sense-Certainty” is the necessarily conceptually mediated character of all knowing, judgment, and language.

At the end of “Sense-Certainty,” Hegel remarks that the immediate object that the natural consciousness seeks to comprehend in sense-experience is “the only thing left over” (PhS §99/GW9 72). The universality of conceptual mediation is incapable of grasping the immediacy of sense-experience. One could say that what Hegel considers “left over” is picked up and made the center of Deleuze’s philosophical project. Deleuze argues that Hegel’s refusal to consider the singular object other than as conceptually

mediated is indicative of the limitations of his dialectical method. It is not just the singular object that is lost with this approach, but also the empirical and with it any genuine notion of difference. Deleuze turns Hegel's thought on its head—he posits empirical difference as the condition of conceptual difference. Before Deleuze lays out the details of his project of transcendental empiricism, he first lays bare the philosophical limitations of dialectical and representational thinking. At this point it is therefore useful to set the scene for Deleuze's criticism of Hegel by differentiating Deleuze's analysis of how to begin philosophy from Hegel's consideration of the problem.

The problem of beginning is an iconic one in Hegel's thought. In *Difference and Repetition* and *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze plays with Hegel's analysis of this problem. Hegel's discussion of sense-certainty and indexicality forms the backdrop for his own consideration of the problem of beginning philosophy. Hegel's dialectic and the way he conceives of the relation of conceptuality to the empirical establish from the very beginning of the *Phenomenology* a logic of opposition. "He represents concepts instead of dramatizing Ideas: he creates a false theatre, a false drama, a false movement. Hegel betrays and distorts the immediate in order to ground his dialectic in that incomprehension, and to introduce mediation in a movement which is no more than that of his own thought and its generalities" (DR 10/18–19).⁵

The false theatre of Hegelian representation, with its mediations and oppositions, is contrasted with Deleuze's theatre of repetition that can experience the immediate and the singular as "pure forces, dynamic lines of space." Deleuzian repetition is a "language which speaks before words" and which can act "without intermediary upon spirit" (DR 10/19). Hegel's false start in the *Phenomenology* sets Deleuze a challenge: to present a discursive terrain that thinks difference, immediacy, and singularity, in a manner that does not constrain them under mediated universals. In the passages quoted above, Deleuze is explicitly contesting the opening movement of the *Phenomenology* and what he takes to be the logic and methodology of the negative. Hegel's beginning and his method set philosophy on a misguided trajectory that takes it away from what should be its primary task: "determining problems and realizing in them our power of creation and decision" (DR 268/344). It is possible to create a concept that is unmediated;

indeed, all of *Difference and Repetition* could be described as attempting to capture what he terms “the individual” (*L’individu*). This is not simply a singular object but a field of individuation that is the condition for all difference and determination. Where Hegel’s thought is concerned to resolve itself through contradiction into more adequate forms of thought, Deleuze looks to the ground from which all differentiation originates.

Chapter 3 of *Difference and Repetition*—“The Image of Thought”—examines the problem of where to begin philosophy. It opens with an explicit critique of Hegel’s own examination of the problem of beginning. Despite Hegel’s criticism of the Cartesian cogito that it presupposes an empirical self with which we are familiar but which remains unexamined, Deleuze argues that Hegel’s own attempt at a presuppositionless beginning makes precisely the same mistake: it presupposes “the sensible, concrete, empirical being” to which his own purportedly presuppositionless beginning—“pure being”—must refer (DR 129/169). Deleuze spends some time examining Hegel’s use of the indexicals “this,” “here” and “now.” As we have already seen, Hegel argues that these terms cannot explain the immediate object of experience. Deleuze claims that the opening arguments of the *Phenomenology* assume an empirical reality against which it attempts to have its knowledge claims of sense-certainty correspond. This empirical reality is therefore antecedent to the epistemic claims of sense-certainty. Sense-certainty assumes, but is unable to acknowledge, that the empirical is the *condition* for the conceptual. The empirical cannot be constrained by a single identity or a concept; rather, it is the very field of potentialities that allow such extraordinary variety. Hegel’s concepts and his dialectical method attempt to restrain and constrict this domain.

Hegel’s attempt to begin philosophy contains a further presupposition: that thought and truth are aligned. The presuppositionless beginning in fact rests on an image of thought that is unquestioned: “it formally possesses the true and materially wants the true” (DR 131/172). This image, or “subjective presupposition,” underwrites and directs much of the modern philosophical project. Deleuze argues, drawing on Nietzsche, that such a philosophical project is pursued on the basis of a thin morality, not a sustained critique: “Morality alone is capable of persuading us that thought has a good nature and the thinker a good will, and that only the good can ground the

supposed affinity between thought and the True" (DR 132/172). The philosophical imperative, if one is to make a genuinely critical (presuppositionless) beginning, requires acknowledging this image and this morality. Since this image corrupts the critical aspiration, philosophy must *liberate* thought from this image. There is a Kantian sensibility at play here: philosophy can only begin when our assumptions are examined and disclosed.

The image and moral that took hold of philosophy was—like so many other problems in modern philosophy—initiated by Descartes. He assumes a universal capacity ("common sense") that allows humans to assess claims to universality. It is a process, as we see in his meditations, where the philosopher abstracts from her own experience. He assumes that the abstraction and the rigor of the self-examination provide the methodological basis for the claims that are made being universally acknowledged. He makes the further assumption that this form of philosophical reflection is possible for all rational subjects. Deleuze argues that common sense adopts a recognitive model of thought by which the only valid forms of knowledge are universal concepts that follow a logic of identification (of recognized and recognizable). A logic of identification is supposed to govern and coordinate the faculties in all subjects: "An object is recognized, however, when one faculty locates it as identical to that of another . . . this form of identity in objects relies upon a ground in the unity of a thinking subject, of which all the faculties must be modalities. This is the meaning of the Cogito as a beginning . . . it thereby expresses the possibility that all the faculties will relate to a form of object which reflects the subjective identity" (DR 133/174).

The recognitive model of thought that Descartes and much of modern thought assume, culminating in Hegel, is grounded on a unified subject. Thought based on recognition is essentially built on a static and passive model of perception—an object is immediately judged to be what it is on the basis of a conformity between the recognized and recognizable; no other way in which the object might be is contemplated. Deleuze argues that Kant's richly theorized model of mind is an elaborate version of this static-passive perceptual model of recognition. In Kant's thought the faculties are harmoniously coordinated (by the I think that accompanies all its representations) in such a way that the object is considered only as "correlate of the

‘I think,’” that is, something recognized (DR 135/176). Thought, by virtue of its alignment with these cognitive faculties, is uniform and universalizable. Recognition, within this tradition, defines what it is to think. So we have two related but defective pillars that distort thought: recognition, which governs the way we think of objects, and a unified subject with its unified faculties.

There are, Deleuze argues, two paths philosophy can take: One is essentially conservative and passive, characterized by recognition and common sense. The other path, which has its genesis in Nietzsche’s thought, can break thought free from the limitations of representation (a retrograde image of thought that plagues the philosophical tradition).⁶ This alternative path is active and has its basis in a sensibility that is not reactive but that forces us to think and can genuinely establish the new. Hegelian thought is bound to the conservative model of “recognizable and recognized,” an approach that simply recirculates established patterns of identification and existing values. If philosophy is tied exclusively to this cognitive model, then it cannot challenge established practices or create something new, because all it does is “rediscover all the current values” that it then presents as eternal truths (DR 136/177). This problem, as will be discussed shortly, is the basis of Deleuze’s critique of the reflective model of consciousness and the Cartesian ego. Deleuze maintains (echoing Hegel’s critique of Fichte) that modern self-consciousness, in its Hegelian manifestation, is the cognitive model writ large; all it does is set out to find itself in the external world. Rather than being open to transformation or affirmation, it is just a self-identity that satisfies itself by seeing only itself in what it sets out to make sense of.

Deleuze is concerned with a different array of problems: life, the new, immanence, and sensation. All of these terms are presented in a manner that enables philosophy to be creative, that is, to think in a form that is adequate to difference. Difference is established not through dialectical mediation and identity, but rather in response to “problematics” that emerge from the objects themselves. A creative philosophy responds to these problems with a set of systematic concepts that it develops out of the confrontation or speculative encounter that is freed from the limiting assumptions of common sense or rational thought that assumes thought has access to and corresponds with the given. The question-and-answer

relation that Deleuze has in mind is therefore dialectical, but it is a dialectic that is conceived to free itself from the dogmatic image of Hegelian and Kantian dialectics. The dogmatic image of thought, with its representational and recognitive relation to the objects of experience, sees only itself in its encounters. Its philosophical engagement is entirely self-referential, occupied only with its own image.

As we have already seen, Deleuze argues that genuine thinking is the “object of a fundamental encounter” that “forces us to think” (DR 139/182). Such thinking entails the destruction of imagistic thinking since it is outside the existing patterns of mediation and representation. One of the strategies Deleuze employs to conceive this encounter is to present as its “primary characteristic that it can only be sensed” (DR 139/182). Deleuze contrasts “sense” to the Kantian and Hegelian versions of sensibility, which are coordinated and recognized by the faculties. Sensations, in the way Deleuze understands them, are “grasped” not as representations of objects, but rather as “a range of affective tones.” What can be sensed in standard representational-recognitive models of mind is not what can be sensed *per se*; rather, the sensed object is apprehended by faculties that allow it only to be “recalled, imagined or conceived.” What is sensed, as Deleuze conceives it, can “only be sensed” and accordingly cannot conform to existing ideas and concepts; what is sensed is therefore “opposed to recognition” (DR 139/182). Sensibility moves us, perplexes us, and forces us to question. It is not a solution to a ready-made question.

A sustained examination of sensibility is beyond the scope of this chapter; what is at issue here is the way Deleuze’s account of sense influences his examination of subjectivity. Sensibility is a kind of ground of thought that is prior to and other to the structures of recognition by which thought is traditionally understood. The intensity of sensibility is not a pattern of identity coordinated by the faculties; it is not assigned a meaning by the type of apperceptive consciousness we have seen in Kant. What is sensed—in the Deleuzian view—has a transcendental function in that it is *the condition for* both thinking and the communication between the faculties, but they are not able to be made present to it in any straightforwardly recognitive manner: “they cannot be grasped from the point of view of common sense” (DR

143/186). Sense does not issue from the thoughts of a unified subject whose transcendental character is the condition for thought and whose thinking aligns with a recognizable identity of the object. The thinking that sense forces on the subject is, by contrast, a “forced broken connection which traverses the fragments of a dissolved self as it does the borders of a fractured I” (DR 145/190). Sense is a kind of intensive subfield that runs behind and yet determines all ideas in a manner that conforms neither to a categorial architectonic nor to the unity of the faculties of the subject. My concern here is to examine the way in which this disinterment of sense and thought from the transcendental subject and its unified faculties and thoughts transforms the traditional model of subjectivity (the cogito).

INDIVIDUATION AND THE CRITIQUE OF THE SUBJECT

The Cartesian cogito, as we have seen throughout this book, is the ground that makes thought, knowledge, and judgment possible. Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism turns this arrangement on its head: the “intensive field of individuation” produces subjectivity. The “intense field of individuation” is a more profound determination of subjectivity than the “I think.” The formation of the subject has its basis in a sensibility that precedes any self-reflection. The terms Deleuze uses to describe this transcendental field—“sensibility” and “intensity”—attempt to map a set of operative practices that cannot be straightforwardly transposed onto the subject or a transcendental categorial framework. If, for example, “I” is taken as the representative expression of subjectivity, we might think of it as universalizing the singular I as species. “I” thereby has a universalizable function that allows its recognition and representation. Individuation, by contrast, is not universalizable in this fashion. A universal such as “I” restricts subjectivity by, Deleuze argues, reducing its multiplicity or fluidity to a singular identity: “Not only does [individuation] differ in kind from all determination of species but, as we shall see, *it precedes and renders the latter possible*. It involves

fields of fluid intensive factors which no more take the form of an I than of a self" (DR 152/197, my emphasis).

One way of making sense of this intensive field is to conceive of it as a type of transcendental empiricism.⁷ This paradoxical description has come to be seen as Deleuze's methodological innovation. The way the intensive field is formulated in the above passage alludes to its transcendental status. The relation of the empirical object to the knowledge of the object, which was discussed in the previous section, is in *Difference and Repetition* a defining problem for how subjectivity is to be considered. Deleuze wants to preserve a determinate role for the empirical. He does this by construing the empirical as "the field of intensity" that is determinative of difference and the discursive, but in such a way that they cannot be said to correspond. The empirical is immanent and differentiated but is unable to be given a discursive presence in the standard mediated repertoire of concepts that recognitive thought employs.

The negative, the motor of the Hegelian dialectic, as we saw in the discussion of sense-certainty, serves to suppress, exclude, or deny sense or the intensive field in the service of mediated thought. Individuation, by contrast, marks a way of capturing this intensity. Individuation is at the heart of Deleuze's attempt to rethink subjectivity and steer it away from the representational and recognitive limitations of self-consciousness. Individuation cannot be equated with the self-consciousness or the I. "Individuating factors . . . have neither the form of the I nor the matter of the Self. . . . The differences included within the I and the Self are, without doubt, borne by individuals, nevertheless they are not individual or individuating to the extent that they are understood in relation to this identity in the I and this resemblance in the Self" (DR 257/331). The subject is standardly represented as self-identical, with a particularity (for example, selfhood) that is an instantiation of the species (universality). This is the standard picture of the subject that we have seen throughout—self-contained, coherent, and certain. The intensities of individuation, which precede and are the conditions for subjecthood, are fields of *indetermination* that do not conform to these patterns of I and self.

Every individuating factor is already difference and difference of difference. It is constructed upon a fundamental disparity, and functions on

the edges of that disparity as such. That is why these factors endlessly communicate with one another across fields of individuation, becoming enveloped in one another in a demesne *which disrupts the matter of the Self as well as the form of the I. . . . The individual is far from indivisible, never ceasing to divide and change its nature.*

(DR 257/331, my emphasis)

This field is described as “chaotic” and “dissemblanced.” This “chaotic realm of individuation” is the primary determination of subjecthood, and it cannot be transposed onto the I or the self. Even if they are constitutive moments of the subject, they are not, as the previous passage states, to be understood “*in relation to the identity of the I*” (DR 257/331). This is why Deleuze prefers the term “individual” to “self” or “I” because it carries with it the sense of indeterminacy, incompleteness, interruption that distinguished it from I and self.

The subject Deleuze is attempting to capture as individuated is one that is dynamic and disparate. Deleuze does not abandon the subject. However, the model of subjectivity as ego, as self, or as an originary unity is incompatible with the individuated field of intensity, sensibility, and affectivity that produces the subject. Subjectivity is far more accurately conceived as incommensurable rather than identical. Deleuze often describes the subject as “dissolved” or as a “fractured I” in order to capture the way in which it is “undermined by the fields of individuation” (DR 152/197). In *A Thousand Plateaus* he uses the medieval term “haecceity” to describe this subject without a “preliminary unity.”

There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing, or substance. We reserve the name haecceity for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are haecceities in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect or be affected.⁸

Haecceity attempts thereby to capture a way of thinking of singularity that is not syllogistically governed, but is rather a kind of aggregate of individuations.

This field of intensity, or affective plane, which is the condition for thought and subjecthood, cannot be made present to the subject nor is it a template of a transcendental subject. A subject conceived on the model of haecceities, individuation, and intensive fields cannot have the structure of the cogito. Such a subject could not be reflective; it could never have transparent self-knowledge, be self-present, or be self-determining, because there is no prospect for the determinations that produce its subjectivity being identical with it.

THE DISTORTING EFFECTS OF HEGELIAN NEGATION

Deleuze in numerous contexts positions the development of his own thought and its key concepts as a counter to Hegel's thought. This antipathy has, as we saw in the introduction, perhaps as much to do with the institutional context of French academic life as with his individual reflections on Hegel.⁹ *Difference and Repetition* is hostile to the thought of Hegel, with only Descartes coming in for equal treatment. It is in Deleuze's *Nietzsche and Philosophy*—published in 1962—that this hostility is most stridently asserted. In this work self-consciousness and the dialectic are ridiculed. Self-consciousness is described as a sickness that is indicative of the representationalism of the philosophical tradition. The representational model assigns something significance only when it is a content that is presented before a consciousness in accordance with the predetermined certainties of conceptual thought. In its representations a subject wants to dominate another or the external world. *Difference and Repetition* and *Nietzsche and Philosophy* do not offer a serious sustained examination of the notion of Hegelian self-consciousness; the latter in particular understands Hegel's core concepts primarily through the lens of a Kojèvean reading of the master-servant discussion of the *Phenomenology*.

Hegel's notion of self-consciousness is, as we have seen, extraordinarily complex. If, however, there is to be some kind of philosophical exchange between these two thinkers, we need to reexamine Hegel's account of self-consciousness and some of the animating concerns that he shares with

Deleuze, otherwise we will be simply left with Deleuze's opposition to all things Hegelian, an opposition that would prevent any dialogue between these two great thinkers. As Catherine Malabou suggests: "By dint of being designated in such a haunting, insistent, obsessive way . . . does not Hegel's name end up setting itself apart from those of all other philosophers? . . . The problem is then to know why Deleuze never recognizes Hegel as his white whale."¹⁰ By positioning Hegel as "that which must be overcome," Deleuze reproduces the oppositional model of the dialectic that he so dislikes. Hegel must be brought into the "field of the pack" if Deleuze's relation to him is to be considered nondialectically.

Difference and Repetition is not directly concerned with the notion of self-consciousness; indeed, it is rarely mentioned in the text. The primary discussion of subjectivity in that work concentrates on the ego and self, though there are many general comments about the cogito and the standard subject of modernity. As already mentioned, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* gives a caustic criticism of idealist subjectivity. While the strength of the invective is toned down in *Difference and Repetition*, it does reprise and develop this early critique. Deleuze's now classic commentary on Nietzsche presents "force" as the unifying theme of his thought. All social and political orders, concepts, consciousness, and phenomena reflect "states of forces" that are either affirmative or reactive. Representation, bad conscience, recognition, *ressentiment*, nihilism, and pity are reactive forces. Hegel's thought embodies all these reactive forces.¹¹ "Nietzsche's 'yes' is opposed to the dialectical 'no'; affirmation to dialectic negation; difference to dialectical contradiction" (NP 9). Nietzsche substitutes affirmation and enjoyment for the passive and reactive labor of the Hegelian negative. With Nietzsche the relation to the other is not a relation of opposition or domination, but an occasion to affirm and enjoy difference. Deleuze concedes that Hegel's thought offers a sustained examination of difference, but the nature of his examination (and this echoes the criticism leveled against him by Derrida), through the motor of the dialectic, serves a logic of identity that diminishes and refutes difference. The labor of the negative and the dialectical movement it serves are reactive.¹² Problematics, differences, intensive fields, multiplicity, the event, and so on are the affirmative concepts with which that reactive force is challenged.

The themes of *Nietzsche and Philosophy*—critique of the dialectic, play of forces, vitalism—are systematically examined in *Difference and Repetition*. That work, rather than being antidialectical, is anti-Hegelian in the sense that the dialectic per se is not criticized, only its Hegelian instantiation.¹³ Deleuze does not abandon the dialectic: Ideas are problems that are “always dialectical.” The problem is not the dialectic, but the role of the negative in Hegel’s dialectic: “Whenever the dialectic ‘forgets’ its intimate relation to Ideas in the form of problems, . . . it loses its power and falls under the sway of the negative, necessarily substituting for the objectivity of the problematic a simple confrontation between opposing, contrary or contradictory propositions” (DR 164/213). In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze aligns representation and recognition with negation (Hegel’s dialectic). Hegel’s dialectic is the methodology of the metaphysics of presence, because it establishes all relations through negation. Identity, for example, is conceived as essentially negative: the I attains its identity by being able to distinguish itself from what is other to it, an identity that is thereby essentially reactive. Self-mediation and negation are the tools that forge identity rather than the affirmation of difference. Deleuze interprets the dialectic in a thoroughly Fichtean manner: what is posited as the other of the I is transformed through a mediated relation into a constitutive moment of its self-identity. All that is other to the object (the not-I) is presented as merely the negative of the subject; accordingly, all difference is negated in the service of identity. The conception of difference that Hegel articulates, Deleuze argues, operates by a logic that precludes the possibility of difference.

The philosophical program of representation, which characterizes this distorting philosophical tradition, is grounded on a thinking subject. The four philosophical forms of representation (“thought, sensibility, the idea and being”) “culminate in the position of an identical thinking subject, which functions as an identity for concepts in general. . . . The thinking subject brings to the concepts its subjective concomitants: memory, recognition and self-consciousness” (DR 265–66/340–41). This is a Hegelian triad: memory is Deleuze’s shorthand for Hegelian *Aufhebung*, something that preserves without loss (DR 53/75); recognition is, as we have seen, the marker of the thought of identity. The highpoint of this distorting tradition

is Hegelian self-consciousness. The self-identical subject is the host for this distorting image of thought. The self-identical subject grounds the flawed philosophical trajectory that Plato initiates. The concepts it grounds—self-consciousness, memory, recognition, and identity—merely serve to satisfy the representational model of thought, a model that entails projecting oneself onto what is other and then recognizing itself in those things. Recognition and memory recirculate established patterns of identity and thought. Hegelian self-consciousness is simply this paradigm writ large and taken to an extreme, since it cultivates a model in which a subject comes to see itself at home in the world only by making that world its own. The process of making that world its own is one in which it understands its own values, norms, and concepts as the expression of a world with which it is identical.

The master-servant struggle, as has already been discussed, is the interpretative frame through which Deleuze interprets Hegelian self-consciousness. The reason for approaching self-consciousness through this section of the *Phenomenology* is that it epitomizes the two flawed and dogmatic motives at work in this tradition: representation and recognition. Hegel's master-servant discussion is the embodiment of the reactive forces of the negative. This narrative brings to life the labor of the negative in a manner that aims to "conserve or prolong an established historical order" (DR 53/75). The recognition at the core of this struggle simply entrenches existing values and fixes meaning through a mediating process that demands the other acknowledge the truth. And the truth is simply that which the master states it to be. The desire for recognition is motivated primarily by a will to impose the subject's own self-understanding onto the other. The reciprocity of the master-servant struggle recirculates existing values in a closed "dialectical circle."

The recognitive project employs *power*—not reason—to make a value or a concept universal. Difference cannot be thought on the model of negation, which affirms itself simply by denying what it takes to be other to it. Recognition creates nothing, but simply converges all points of view and grounds all representations in a single self. The representational model cannot think the new but merely imposes one view of thought on all others such that this becomes the exclusive image of thought. Representation corrupts philosophy because, rather than providing the condition for its self-transformation

by opening itself to genuine difference, it subordinates difference “by relating it to the requirements of the concept” (DR 29/45). Deleuze’s solution, which would tear the object asunder from this convergence and recirculation, is to reevaluate the sensible (DR 56/80).

HEGELIAN SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICAL

At the outset of this chapter, Hegel and Deleuze were presented as offering two distinct paths by which philosophy should begin. In Hegel’s case empirical objects—the objects of experience in “Sense-Certainty”—were unable to be considered as independent sources of intelligibility. They were meaningful only insofar as they were mediated by thought. Deleuze, as we have seen, takes a different path, positing the empirical as a transcendental domain that is the condition for all differentiation: “The imprint of the Hegelian dialectic on the beginnings of Phenomenology have often been noted: the here and the now are posited as empty identities, as abstract universalities which claim to draw difference along with them, when in fact difference does not by any means follow and remains attached in the depths of its own space, in the here-now of a differential reality always made up of singularities” (DR 51–52/74). Before taking up in more detail the ways in which Deleuze conceives difference, a more detailed examination of the accuracy of Deleuze’s view of Hegel—as typified in the above passage—needs to be undertaken.

Deleuze presents the natural consciousness of “Sense-Certainty” as a kind of simpleton who is content to capture the pluralism of the sensory world with monosyllabic indexicals. The sense-certain natural consciousness is unaware of the limitations of trying to universalize the movement of an individuated “differential-reality” with such terms.¹⁴ Deleuze’s discussion of sense-certainty is a misinterpretation, but it is one that illustrates the philosophical difference between these two thinkers. The attempted explanation of the immediate object of experience with the indexicals (“this,” “here,” “now”) is clearly described by Hegel as producing a discord in the

subject. Moreover, the very motivation to explain its own experience is the result of the natural consciousness considering its own explanations to be inadequate and unsatisfactory. (This reflects Hegel's conception of reason, as we saw in the previous chapter, which is restless and dissatisfied.) How to conceptualize difference is the core problem for sense-certainty. Attempting to provide a thought that is adequate to difference is precisely the problem that propels the text forward.

"Sense-Certainty" does not, as Deleuze claims, set out to deride the empirical. Hegel describes sense-certainty "as a knowledge of an infinite wealth for which no boundary is to be found," but it is, however, the "very poorest *truth*" (PhS §91/GWg 69). There are many ways of explaining this section. As I have said previously, "Sense-Certainty" shows that the empirical cannot have any *explanatory* role independent of thought, knowledge, and subjectivity. Hegel is not denying the reality of a sensuous manifold, but only of the ability of the empirical to *explain* anything, that is, its limitation. Only thought explains. The alienation of the empirical given from the natural consciousness's explanations of it is a profound source of anxiety for the natural consciousness in "Sense-Certainty." This opening discussion initiates a problem that Hegel addresses throughout the *Phenomenology*, and indeed in all his subsequent works: how can self-consciousness be at home in thought? Hegel does not deny that we are natural creatures with affects, emotions, and sensations that orient us in the world; the issue is, however, that those aspects of human life are not the basis for human satisfaction—only thought can provide this.

Deleuze does not correct Hegel's account of the empirical by simply making the empirical the locus of truth. Such a reversal is how one might understand the classical empiricism of Locke—an overturning of rationalism. Deleuze claims that the empirical is the condition for the conceptual, but this does not give the empirical an explanatory role.¹⁵ Explanations are ideas, but the way in which Deleuze conceives of ideas is such that the difference they capture is not exclusively a conceptual difference, as had been the case in the representationalism of modern philosophy (DR 27/41). The problem for Deleuze is how to conceive the relation between individuation and ideas such that the individuation is not reduced to the discursive. I

will take up this issue in subsequent sections, especially in the discussion of Deleuze's response to the concept/intuition distinction. For the moment I want to return to the main theme of this book—subjectivity.

For Deleuze, as we have seen, the way he conceives of individuation, sense, and the play of intensities has implications for refiguring the subject, though he does not draw this out in any great detail. Nevertheless, transcendental empiricism is said to be inconsistent with the dogmatic Cartesian cogito. The standard philosophical repertoire of ego, self, consciousness, and self-consciousness should be replaced with “pre-individual singularities and non-personal individuations.”¹⁶ These terms would more adequately conceive the subject as a noncoincidence of self and a nonidentity to self. Deleuze's reexamination of the empirical is central to his distinctive analysis of subjectivity. Despite wanting to conceive a model of subjectivity that reflects his approach to the empirical and that should thereby be radically different from Hegelian self-consciousness, the character of their respective accounts of subjectivity is less divergent than is usually claimed.

The systematic beginning of the *Phenomenology* has important consequences for the character of self-consciousness articulated in the *Phenomenology*. As we have seen, the initial aim of sense-certainty is to capture the truth of empirical experience, but once any claim is made about this immediate experience of objects, the truth is present in the knowing and not in the object. All the developments of the *Phenomenology* unfold from this initial discordance. As the text develops, knowledge becomes increasingly complex; our most basic claims to know the objects of experience show themselves to be determined by and dependent upon complex conceptual relations and historically developed norms. The natural consciousness realigns its self-understanding such that it conceives itself in terms of these relations and determinations. This realignment results in a reorientation of self-consciousness that undermines the simplistic self-identity of the Cartesian subject. The subject that is produced in the complex unfolding of the text is *not* coincident with itself or with the whole. The text reconfigures the conscious subject such that it is decentered and self-transcending.

Deleuze's caustic analysis of Hegelian self-consciousness presents it as a desire for recognition. The recognition is not of difference but simply

to have its view of the world affirmed, which entails, so the story goes, a straightforward imposition of its own self-understanding onto the world. Despite Hegel's criticisms of Cartesian self-consciousness, Hegel simply expands the Cartesian cogito such that, rather than being a self-contained discrete ground for knowledge, it is posited as substance. The journey of the *Phenomenology* thereby becomes simply the reappropriation of what self-consciousness already is, which it then equates with the world. Against this dialectical behemoth, Deleuze positions his conception of subjectivity. Rather than having transparent self-knowledge, it is formed by ideas, affects, and habits that are necessarily more than it can know of itself, because they have their origin in a chaotic and fluid intensive field, one of the effects of which is subjectivity. This subject must therefore be conceived as radically anti-Cartesian. It is my contention that the *Phenomenology* also involves a radical overhaul of the cogito as a model of subjectivity. Hegel's subject should be understood as essentially self-transcending. Every shape of consciousness in the *Phenomenology* presents its knowledge as certain, yet each claim to know appeals to something beyond the knowing at issue to validate its claim. As each shape collapses, an increasingly complex picture of determinate relations is expressed.

The *Phenomenology* is a project of self-comprehension. The succession of shapes of consciousness that the text unfolds reveals the conditions of knowing that underlie these shapes of knowing to the philosophical onlooker (the we). Consciousness's knowledge claims show themselves as operating within a network of relations that enable its cognition. It gradually recognizes the determinate nature of its knowing, and recognizes further that these are the conditions by which it understands itself. As we saw in chapter 3, the method of self-examination by which the *Phenomenology* progresses eventually results in consciousness recognizing that the way it understands itself and the objects of experience reflects these conditions. Knowing and self-consciousness through this process reveal themselves to be more than either a singular consciousness knowing the world or a reflective self-awareness. Cognition is only possible within a system of conceptual relations, which are the product of a constantly evolving play of determinate forces. These determinations, which frame the norms and concepts

with which the world is interpreted and experienced, and which transcend the conscious subject, are also the condition for its very subjectivity. The *Phenomenology* incrementally discloses these determinations through the collapse and transformation of successive shapes of spirit. The text's pathway is one that both discloses those conditions and is a bid to transform our self-understanding such that we come to explicitly understand ourselves in terms of those conditions. The more consciousness comes to consider itself in terms of these conditions, the more it understands its own self-transcending character. The character of subjectivity is revealed as an interplay of determinations that are beyond it and yet are inscribed in the very way it is aware of itself and the world, determinations that are in a constant process of transformation.

The path that consciousness takes itself through is the result of its own examination of its claims to know. This self-examination takes consciousness beyond itself. The subject returns to itself, but the subject that it comes home to is radically transformed from the singular consciousness of the opening three chapters of the *Phenomenology*. The subject comes to understand the norms and concepts that underwrite its own thinking as not merely the framing conditions of its own knowing and self-consciousness. These cognitive conditions do not align, in any straightforward manner, with the subject. Nevertheless, it comes to understand itself in terms of these conditions, which it recognizes as products of the diverse cultural, historical, and philosophical milieu in which it finds itself. The subject's self-relation is therefore not self-coincident because it reflects the diversity of its normative and interpretative context, a context that is, as I have already remarked, always in transition.

The relations and problems that structure the experience of self and world are not swarms, as they are on Deleuze's view, but are better conceived in Kantian terms as conditions and determinations. Describing these elemental features of self-consciousness as conditions and determinations does not mean that Hegel thinks they can be known in any definitive manner or that they are coincident with the subject. Deleuze describes these conditions as fields of individuation and the play of intensities. They are a kind of transcendental sensibility

in which what is “unthought” is “borne within thought” (DR 152–53/198). As we will see in subsequent sections, this notion has some similarity to the way in which Hegel attempts to resolve the concept/intuition distinction and is indeed Deleuze’s own attempt to respond to the problem. Hegel’s approach is distinctive insofar as the conditions and norms that are determinative of judgment and thought are thoroughly discursive. The role the empirical plays in the formation of self-consciousness cannot be understood in empirical terms, since the empirical must be discursively interpreted. This, of course, is not to say that for Hegel the empirical is not a determination of the subject.¹⁷ The issue, as we have seen repeatedly, is that intuition does not represent an empirical domain as it is in itself; intuitions are in some minimal sense—for Hegel—ideas.

Deleuze, even though he does not assert that the empirical has an explanatory potential, does maintain that “on the path which leads to that which can be thought, all begins with sensibility” (DR 144/189). The intensities that make up the empirical field are not simply affects; they are also ideas, but ideas that allow the reconfiguration of the subject as a fractured I or a dissolved self. Ideas are expressed “in individuating factors” that are swarming at the edges of intensities. Ideas emerge as problems out of the disparity and exchange between individuating factors. The thought these ideas effect is not the product of a thinking subject but of the play of intensities. However, those intensities and the individuations that they effect must be intelligible. They are not a fixed given that remains over and against the subject as a thing-in-itself. If the sensible was unable in some minimal sense to be grasped in thought, while at the same time being presented as the most forceful determination of thought and the subject, then Deleuze’s project would recede into a pre-Kantian metaphysics. Thought has to be able to appeal to the sensible if it is to transform itself and think the new. In order to grasp the sensible, the representational manner of considering the knowing relation has to be radically revised. As we saw in the discussion of Heidegger, central to this revision is the overcoming of the metaphysical subject. Its centrality and authority have to be broken if the system is to allow this singularized empirical to impact on and transform the whole.

Deleuze describes Hegelian self-consciousness as the self-identical Cartesian subject writ large. As we have seen through this work, the pathway of self-understanding that the *Phenomenology* sets in motion does not chart a presupposed set of internal relations onto the external world; rather, it transforms the subject such that its knowing and self-relation must be conceived as self-transcending. The difference between Hegel and Deleuze is not between, on the one hand, a model of subjectivity that is fractured because of its relation to an empirical domain that cannot be overlaid onto the subject and, on the other hand, a subject that is simply self-identical. Hegel and Deleuze are often contrasted in this way: Hegel, through his monolithic self-consciousness posits all meaning internal to the subject, while Deleuze refigures his subject such that its identity is fractured by the transcendental status of the non-representational empirical. The difference between Deleuze and Hegel is better approached through the way they consider the subject's relation to determinations that are external to it. In Hegel's case the play of determinations that is constitutive of spirit and that frames any subject's self-awareness and experience must be understood as self-determined because of the way he responds to the concept/intuition dualism. Hegel argues that spirit is the whole; finite consciousness could not, however, make present to itself all of those conditions and relations; indeed, those relations are constantly being revised and transformed. Nevertheless, there is no source *beyond spirit* to which one could appeal as an alternative authority or realm of meaning.

THE RECEPTION OF KANT'S LEGACY IN DELEUZE AND HEGEL

Heidegger's and Nietzsche's critiques of the philosophical tradition are powerful influences on Deleuze. Deleuze argues that in Kant's thought there was already an unacknowledged fracture line that challenged the unity of the subject. For a brief moment the hegemony of the Cartesian subject is challenged by Kant's distinction, in the transcendental deduction, between

the empirical ego and the transcendental ego. Deleuze describes it in this way: "The Self of the 'I think' includes in its essence a receptivity of intuition in relation to which *I* is already an other. . . . For a brief moment we enter into that schizophrenia in principle which characterizes the highest power of thought, and opens being directly onto difference" (DR 58/82). The empirical ego is that aspect of self that is open to the manifold. This openness allows the subject to be affected by the sheer diversity of the empirical. By contrast, the transcendental ego is what allows judgments to be held together over time and provides the requisite unity for self-consciousness. The passivity of the empirical ego opens it to difference, because it is a site of exposure to the manifold. The thinking activity of the subject, its spontaneity, can make representations to itself only in terms of the categories of thought. Thought is, however, affected by the receptivity of the manifold, though it has no resources to express the empirical other than the discursive. In this sense it is a divided subject. The receptivity of intuition makes the *I already* another, since it opens subjectivity to something other to thought.

This division maps, at the level of subjectivity, the central division in the *Critique of Pure Reason* between concept and intuition, that is, between the active and passive components of experience. As we have seen throughout this book, overcoming the dualism of concept and intuition is one of the defining problems of post-Kantian philosophy. Deleuze, however, thinks that the attempt to synthesize this division is the profound mistake of German idealism. Deleuze embraces this division; the tension between these two ways of seeing the world is emblematic of the "highest power of thought," since it raises a problem that requires a genuinely new response (DR 58/82). Kant, however, shies away from embracing the irresolvable ambiguity of this problem, instead sacrificing the empirical at the altar of the self-determining subject. It is worth dwelling a little on this tension between the transcendental and the empirical ego in Kant, since for both Hegel and Deleuze it is an important distinction. The different ways they respond to this problem are instructive for their respective conceptions of subjectivity.

In an act of self-reflection, the self makes itself an object; in so doing, it must make use of the *I* to judge the *I*. This is Kant's famous "inconvenience": "Now it is, indeed, very illuminating that *I* cannot cognize as an object

itself that which I must presuppose in order to cognize an object at all, and that the determining self (the thought) is different from the determinable self (the thinking subject) as cognition is different from its object" (CPR A402). Charles Taylor formulates the problem like this: "we are objects to ourselves only as empirical selves, not as the original subject; this Kant takes as a bar to knowledge of self-consciousness."¹⁸ In self-reflection I treat myself as an object. The self I make an object is the empirical self, because this is the self I experience as myself (the "inner sense" self) (CPR A107). The empirical self is not the *in itself* or the truth of the self, which would require that it be prior to or the condition of any possible experience. The transcendental self is the self that must be employed to investigate the empirical self.

In this reading, to get to the "real self" and thereby gain self-consciousness, I would have to investigate the transcendental self, but this, argues Hegel, is impossible. He puts the problem this way: "[Kant] fixes on how the 'I' appears in self-consciousness, but from this 'I,' since it is its essence (the *thing-in-itself*) that we want to cognize, he removes everything empirical; nothing then remains but this appearance of the 'I think' that accompanies all representations and of which we do not have *the slightest concept*" (SL 691/GW12 194). This abstracted transcendental self is devoid of all content, and cannot be made an object of investigation. To make it an object would require that the transcendental subject be experienced as the inner self, which is not possible, since once it is an object of reflection, it would no longer be this apperceptive "I think" but the empirical self.

Kant's problematic here has a distinguished lineage. Descartes, when he took his I as an object, simply assumed an immediate self-perception, that is, a straightforward identity of existence with thought. The conditions that allowed Descartes to take himself as an object were ignored. In Hume's account, self-consciousness is problematic since he is unable to find among the objects of experience a self. Without an object of which he could have an impression, self-consciousness remains for him a mystery. Kant, however, unlike Hume, does not think we need to experience the self in order to establish the truth of a unified self. He argues that precisely because we cannot experience the self and yet there is a self that unifies our experiences,

there must be an a priori unifying principle. This conclusion does not mean, however, that Kant abandons empirical consciousness.

Hegel and Deleuze are in effect in agreement regarding the dualistic nature of Kant's subject, but they disagree on the way to confront the division between these two components of Kantian selfhood. Hegel thinks that there is a structural mistake in this way of conceiving self-consciousness that is indicative of the general way Kant frames his entire project. For Hegel: "It is wrong to assume, first that there are objects which form the content of our representations and then our subjective activity comes along behind them, forming the concepts of objects" (EnL §163z2). Hegel undermines this division between intuited object and concept by showing that the categories of thought are the only way in which there is a world for us. The way Kant conceived of the transcendental subject generally suffered from a vestigial Cartesianism because it grounded experience in an abstract formal ego. Such a beginning point was unstable and arbitrary for Hegel, and once we begin with such a subject, we have the problem of how to connect the world to it. The separation of the empirical and the discursive into two distinct aspects of experience raised the problem of how they could be reconnected. Deleuze disputes this analysis, arguing that there is an irrevocable connection between these spheres that should not be resolved by transforming the empirical into a subset of the discursive, and that moreover the empirical ought not play second fiddle to the conceptual.

By beginning with the whole, that is, with a historicized spirit, Hegel strives to avoid the set of problems that come with Cartesian consciousness (self-reflection, inner and outer sense, isolation, distanced spectator). The language of spirit and the Concept is designed to correct the deficiencies in this approach. There are two closely intertwined issues (the concept/intuition distinction and the transcendental unity of apperception), which I will only touch on briefly here since we have covered them in detail in previous chapters, that show why Hegel focuses on the spontaneous side of self-consciousness to overcome the tensions in Kant's view of subjectivity.

Kant tried to unify the traditional opposition between empiricism and rationalism by arguing that these two approaches represented legitimate but opposed forms of knowing. In his critical philosophy he brings these two

ways of knowing together by asserting that there was a single unified cognition that had two faculties: receptivity and spontaneity. Post-Kantian idealism is united in arguing that the division between rationalism and empiricism that Kant had sought to reconcile is reproduced in his own thought, precisely because Kant's two-faculty approach to cognition divided consciousness from world. Kant had claimed that concept and intuition were inseparable. Hegel, however, argues that intuition's role in cognition retains too much of its empiricist origins, and consequently preserves truth as a given sensuous reality cut off from knowing. Kantian intuition, just as with empiricism, assumes an immediate and given empirical domain that is not mediated through concepts (SL 24/GW21 28). Kant preserved the importance of the empirical because thought needed to be constrained by representations of what is received through intuition. Without a nonconceptual intuitive faculty providing the content to experience, knowledge appeared unable to make any claims to objectivity. Hegel thinks this is an unsustainable claim. The idea that there was something that was a constitutive element of knowledge and experience and yet was immediate and given was problematic. Moreover, despite Kant's claim that intuitions and concepts are distinct aspects of a unified knowledge, the way in which concepts connected with the raw intuitive experiential content was unclear and unpersuasive. As we have seen, the result of this approach was a subjective metaphysics.

Hegel overcomes the dualism of concept and intuition by stripping the intuitive of any appeal to the given. Experience is not of a given empirical reality that concepts forge into a determinate discursive form. Hegel reconceives intuition such that it is not purely conceptual but neither is it empirically given. As we have seen in the discussion of Kant's transcendental subject, Kant thought that concepts were bound to a subjective sphere that frames the way in which subjects make judgments and with which they experience the world. Beyond this sphere, on Hegel's reading of Kant, is an unreachable supersensible or noumenal sphere that is not accessible to this subjective sphere. It is a realm completely other to human mindedness. The only way to avoid appealing to the given, as an empirical world that constrains thought by making it answerable to empirical experience, is to conceive of spirit and the Concept as, in the broadest sense, self-determined.

For Hegel, experience is embedded in forms of life or shapes of spirit that have to be conceived as historically and socially mediated, that is, they must be understood in some minimal sense to be discursive. Experience has to be in some sense thoroughly conceptual; only then can the need to position the world over and against us as a given be avoided.

The problem, however, is that once the role of nonconceptual content in experience is relinquished, then the constraint of the world on concepts is lost. Without appeal to either Platonism or an empirical given as arbiters of an independent truth, one has to be able to see all meaning determination as self-determined. Once the standards of judgment and the concepts employed in judgment are taken to be inherently self-determined, this produces a host of problems alluded to previously, such as how norms can be transformed and validated. Understanding the importance of Hegel's response to these problems can help explain many of his most controversial formulations: substance as subject, truth as the whole, thought overcoming otherness, freedom as being-at-home with oneself in otherness, and so on. All these phrases are Hegel's way of signaling the need to deny any explanatory role for the supersensible and nonconceptual content. Traditionally Hegel's self-producing spirit was thought to show the self-determined character of the whole only by reverting to a strongly metaphysical spirit-monism, that is, by effectively reclaiming a precritical position. However, a far more productive way to understand Hegel's response to the set of unresolved problems that emerge from Kant's critical philosophy is, as we have seen, to think of spirit as an enhancement of self-determining subjectivity. Nevertheless, in order to avoid skepticism and to make his claims more than "a frictionless spinning in a void," Hegel needs to connect subject and object. It is to Kantian apperception that he looks to ensure these problems are avoided.

The transcendental unity of apperception in Kant's thought is the unified I that accompanies all one's representations; it is the aspect of mindedness that allows us to know and to make claims to be in a specific mental state. Hegel repeatedly argues that apperception is formal, something that Kant himself had emphasized. Transcendental apperception is the most exiguous of conditions for self-consciousness: merely to be able to claim

one's thoughts and mental states as one's own. The "I think" serves only to "introduce all thinking as belonging to consciousness" (CPR A341/B399). Hegel argues that such a limited role for apperception is not warranted. Apperception properly conceived is capable of moving beyond the merely "external relation" of concepts to objects. In apperception, categories are not *applied* by consciousness to an intuited entity, as though they were a tool that the mind employs to make sense of an external and alien world. In Hegel's account, the object is not separable from its conception and our judgment. In apperception, judgments about objects can be made precisely because the unity of the thing is inscribed by the thought of it.¹⁹ Because an object's determinations are conceptual, it can be objective. Interestingly, in the *Logic* Hegel, as we saw in chapter 3, attributes its objectivity to the nature of self-consciousness. This is not a crude subjective idealism, but rather a direct appeal to Kantian apperception, precisely because the comprehension and experience of the object require that it be thought.

Apperception has a supra-oppositional quality that enables it to bridge the dualism of subject and object. The I is required to actively think the object, but the truth of the object is not simply in the comprehension by a single subject; rather, "it is only in *thought* that it is in and for itself" (SL 516/GW12 18). In our judging activity, which is for Hegel the essential feature of experience and thought, there is no representational authentication that takes place by which our judgments are compared to an other—the object in itself or the given. For Hegel, all we have is the judging activity. The possible ways in which we can experience and consider the object are produced through a complex unfolding of historical and social forces. These are the conditions by which we think and judge as well as being the basis of our self-consciousness. This is the only way in which objects can be experienced. Objects have no status outside of the whole, that is, outside of our collective sense-making practices.

One could not simply reflect on oneself and disclose the determinations of one's own self-consciousness in some singular sense in the manner of Descartes. And this is precisely because the conceptuality that is constitutive of consciousness, and the object world of which it is

conscious, overarches this subject-object relation. Self-reflection cannot be to the mind what the reflection of the mirror is to one's physical appearance. This kind of reflection is incapable of grasping the conditions that are constitutive of self-consciousness. Hegel is thoroughly anti-Cartesian. The revised self-consciousness that emerges in "Absolute Knowing" recognizes the delusion that one could know, as it were, transparently both oneself and the conditions of one's cognition and experience in an ahistorical or transcendental manner. Deleuze considers idealist self-consciousness as largely continuous with the Cartesian reflective model of self-consciousness. In Hegel's case, while the conditions and categories that constitute the various ways in which we understand ourselves and the world have to be understood to be self-determined, we could never understand them all or make them present to us; indeed, they are always being transformed. Our knowledge is dependent on conditions, as with Kantian self-consciousness, but we can never know these in any definitive way. If this is the case, then our autonomy appears challenged and limited, since the Kantian idea of autonomy presupposes that these cognitive conditions could be understood. The necessity for resolving the dualism of concept and intuition and for connecting mind and world means that Hegel's only option is a self-determining spirit. That is, where Deleuze wants to preserve the dissonance in the Kantian division between transcendental and empirical subjectivity, Hegel has to resolve them, otherwise the idea of self-determined spirit also has to be abandoned and with it the problem of the given would reemerge.

HEGEL AND THE DYNAMISM OF MODERN LIFE

Deleuze, as we have seen, undermines the stability of the subject by conceiving the transcendental empirical as something that forces itself upon thought, giving thought an important aspect that is involuntary. Thought, rather than being the product of the collective effort of self-determining

subjects, is better conceived as produced by effects that are external to the subject, effects that are not under the control of an authorizing agent. Hegel's self-determining subject, like the thought aligned with it, is fixed and motionless because it cannot be open to the new. Hegel's system does not attempt to express difference and dynamism but rather constrains it in the successive resolutions of contradictions.

While it is clear that contradiction is important as part of Hegel's philosophical project of making sense of how values are transformed and concepts created, Hegel sees modern life and human subjectivity as dynamic, and this is what he attempts to grasp in his notion of the dialectic. Dialectic is for Hegel the philosophical form appropriate to modernity.²⁰ In the previous chapter we saw how that dynamism operated at the level of reason. What I want to do here is to briefly map out, at the social and political level, why Hegel's thought must be seen as dynamic.

What comes through all Hegel's writings is that thought, history, and spirit are in a constant state of transition and revision. Thought, in particular, is said to be restless, constantly dissatisfied with claims to know. It strives for thought to be adequate to the shape of life it inhabits, but because human spirit is dynamic, philosophical reflection is in constant movement, always striving to make itself adequate to the determinate shape of life it inhabits. This, for Hegel, is part and parcel of human history and of human subjectivity, both of which are constantly transforming themselves. What occurs for Hegel in the Enlightenment is the clear recognition that this is the case. The "*Cogito ergo sum*" are the first words in Descartes' system; and it is precisely these words which express modern philosophy's difference from all its predecessors."²¹ Descartes's thought puts the self-grounding thinking subject at the center of philosophy. This is consolidated in modernity, which strives to make us self-conscious of our status as thinking and self-determining beings.

In modernity, norms are no longer authorized by God, a platonic universal, fixed tradition, or natural law. Modernity's break with the past is based on its ongoing contestation of norms and how those norms can be legitimated. The ideal of modernity is that it subjects its norms to constant criticism and contention; persistent self-criticism is what gives it its dynamism. Modernity in this sense makes explicit the freedom and reflective capacity

of the human subject. Ancient philosophers like Socrates, who no longer appealed to mythological representation, stand with the moderns because for them freedom was achieved when thought was concerned with itself. This beautiful passage from the *Encyclopedia Logic* encapsulates the self-determining ethos of the Enlightenment as well as the freedom of philosophical reflection: "This kind of being purely with itself is inherent in free thought, sailing off into the free, open space where there is nothing below or above us, and where we stand in solitude alone with ourselves" (EnL §312). What Hegel takes to be missing from early modern philosophy and early modern life itself are the social and political conditions in which this kind of freedom could be realized. Modernity had set the world in motion, freeing it from all dogmatism with a self-determining subject as the center of the legitimation of norms. But that subject could not realize itself or actualize its freedom without the objective conditions that could facilitate that freedom. The modern subject needed an objective expression of its subjective freedom.

For Hegel, the modern state and the civil society that emerge at the end of the eighteenth century had the potential to be the objective conditions for the subjective freedom that the Enlightenment had finally brought to self-consciousness. The *Philosophy of Right* charts progressive changes in the objective criteria for freedom (rights, morality, and ethical life). This systematic description of successive attempts to realize human freedom shows, among many other things, the limitations of individual autonomy as the model for freedom, and ultimately why it has to be corrected by expanding the model of autonomy to the social and political level. Modern life provides for Hegel the best conditions for achieving a collective self-understanding because its institutions both mirror and enable subjective freedom. The development of these objective conditions of freedom is a collective achievement. The critical issue for Hegel is that notions of self-production and self-transformation are *explicit* in the idea of modern life. Because we comprehend ourselves as self-determining, this in turn provides the optimal conditions for the ongoing transformations of our self-understanding, that is, it allows for the continual revision of habituated reasons and norms. This constant transformation does not, as with premodern

societies, cause the collapse of the social order, since the very idea of self-transformation is the essential principle of modern society.

The fluidity and movement of modern self-understanding, subjectivity, and values required a modern response to the objectivity of norms. There is enormous contestation as to how to conceive the self-determining capacity of humans such that its self-produced norms are binding on us. The historical, social, political, and rational features involved in determining what can count as a legitimate reason or justification are fundamental concerns of Hegel's project, but the problem is how such norms could be authoritative if they are self-legitimated. This is a much more complex issue than I can examine here, but it is useful to briefly show one way of thinking how this might be resolved. Terry Pinkard, Robert Brandom, and Robert Pippin have argued that Hegelian reason ought to be considered as fundamentally social. The modern social order, if it is to combine the implied freedom of the autonomous subject and the dynamic institutions of modern public life, also had to be reconceived as rational. Were its categories and rules taken to have their authority in a transcendent domain, then the autonomous subject (whose freedom was based on her rationality) could not be at home in the modern world. Consequently, reason and conceptuality itself had to be reconstrued to be fundamentally social.²² This sociality of reason begins to translate into objective social and political structures at the end of the eighteenth century.

Hegel's concern with structures of recognition is indicative of his response to modernity. Reason's capacity for self-correction is not grounded in an essential nature or immediacy. Something nondiscursive or transcendent cannot be the legitimate basis for judgment. On this view, reason's self-grounding has come to mean that norms are binding and authoritative because they are based on structures of intersubjective recognition. This intersubjective grounding of norms is rational and objective largely because of the way Hegel reconfigures Kantian autonomy. Rather than a single individual, who has the gift of objective disembodied rational thought, and who subjects herself to the law as if she were its author, in Hegel's case the reasons we give for our actions have to be understood as socially, politically, and historically evolved. We can only act

as if we are rationally law governed, because of the communal, historical, and interrecognitive ties binding individuals together. Hegel's claim that spirit is self-producing is not the story of a given rational structure unfolding itself over time, as the traditional metaphysical view of Hegel had claimed. It is far better conceived, as Robert Pippin describes it, as the evolution of a "common like-mindedness."²³ "Self-producing spirit" is the term Hegel uses to capture collective human self-determination that is capable of producing a set of evolving intersubjectively derived conditions that form the basis of judgment and that come to be authoritative for us and binding on us through the complex recognitive interplay of social, political, and economic relations. Hegel thinks that modern social and political life (modern objective spirit), unlike any other period in human history, has at least the formal capacity to revise existing norms and claims to know without undermining the extant social and political edifice, precisely because it provides the social and institutional conditions by which the revision of norms can be rationally legitimated.

Unlike other epochs, which based their ethical order on God, nature, or established tradition, modernity had to conceive a way for itself to be self-grounding. Hegel thinks the seed of that self-grounding is visible in the institutions of modern life. The deficiencies in self-understanding and in its way of life, and the norms that result from those deficiencies, are authorized through the socially and institutionally mediated "agreement" and "acknowledgment" between subjects.²⁴ We individually have to see ourselves in those institutions and social relations that so define us, that is, we have to recognize the reasons we give as our own, but also recognize that these norms and reasons are the result of historical developments. Moreover, the rationality of modern institutions, especially civil society, provides an environment for fierce disagreement, but because modern subjects understand the self-determined character of modern life and are at home in its institutions, such disagreements do not result in the kind of normative incompatibility—and consequent social collapse—that Hegel saw, for example, in Sophocles's Athens.

Hegel's concern with the self-determined subject and self-producing spirit is in part because he accepts, with some reservations, the Kantian ideal of freedom as self-legislation. However, the more important issue in the

context of Deleuze's reading of Hegel is that self-producing spirit was the only way to resolve the concept/intuition dualism. The only way to avoid the problems of Kant's philosophy, which I will say more about below, was to see the conditions of experience and judgment as necessarily the products of self-determined spirit. Deleuze takes the self-regulating premise of this whole approach, no matter how it is expressed, to be simply delusional and destructive. However, what I want to argue is that Deleuze fails to take into consideration that recognition and the whole logical, social, and political edifice that Hegel describes are designed to express a dynamic subject and a world set in motion.

SELF-WORLD RELATION

As we have seen, Hegel overcomes the dualism of mind and world by expanding the notion of self-determination as well as the apperceptive self, and abandoning any conception of the given. Experience must be conceived as a judging, and the categories that frame the basis of those judgments are the products of collective human history. The character of our experience of the world is something that we are collectively responsible for. Hegel conceives experience in this way in order to resolve tensions in the sensible-conceptual relation, in the opposite way to Deleuze. For Deleuze, Hegel's account of experience, because it shifts the emphasis to the discursive, is limited and restrictive. The implication of this strategy is that the sensible and difference are reduced to the categories of judgment and the activities of the subject. Judgment is the faculty by which the world is parceled up through analogy and recognition. These categories are the defining expression of idealist thought; they are the tools of mind by which it tries to know and manage the world.

We have already seen that Deleuze thinks Kant abandons a great insight by privileging the spontaneous and the apperceptive over the sensible. For Deleuze, self-determining subjectivity and spontaneity, which are the focus of the Fichtean-Hegelian branch of post-Kantian idealism, as well as the

whole edifice of spirit, the Concept, and dialectic, all employ difference in the service of identity. Kant's subject has two distinct aspects: on the one hand, it is self-determined, spontaneous, and active and, on the other hand, it is undetermined, passive, and receptive. Of these two paths, it is the former that holds the most sway with Kant. The active side is the one taken up by Kant and explicitly developed in the transcendental unity of apperception, and it is associated with the great achievements of his practical philosophy. It is also the line preserved and pursued by Fichte and Hegel. The reason that Hegel focuses on the active side is partly because he is convinced that self-determination is the highest realization of human freedom; but it is also, as we have seen, the only way to resolve intractable problems in the way Kant conceives the concept/intuition distinction.

Deleuze returns to the scene of the Kantian crime. In Deleuze's case the transcendental empirical that he lays claim to is of an entirely different order; it is not an interpretative schema through which reality is interpreted. Existence cannot be reduced to the categorial frame of the transcendental subject. What is instructive in Deleuze's claim for a transcendental status for the empirical is that Deleuze, like Hegel, is making a much more robust claim for thought than Kant is. Both Hegel and Deleuze reject the idea of the thing-in-itself cut off from thought. The sensible is not, for Deleuze, something intuited by a distinct faculty isolated from the discursive aspect of experience; rather, the sensible has a transcendental status. The sensible is the condition of experience and provides its constitutive content nonconceptually (or at least not concepts as the idealists conceive them), and it is not molded into a digestible form by a subjectively derived set of categories. The sensible is existence and the origin of diversity and difference. While Deleuze thinks the focus on self-determined subjectivity is tyrannical and the transcendental subject distorting, the sensible, as he conceives it, is nevertheless not isolated from discursivity. In order to escape from the Kantian dualism, which would leave the sensible cut off from the discursive, he needs the empirical to affect thought. That is, both Deleuze and Hegel respond to the subject-object division that results from the concept/intuition distinction and Kant's transcendental subject by trying to reconnect subject and object,

though they take different approaches to this. We have already seen how Hegel strives to achieve this in his account of self-consciousness by focusing on a revised apperceptive and spontaneous subject.

Deleuze, by contrast, begins with a transcendental empirical, a real difference, not a merely conceptual difference. This difference is not a metaphysical truth that lies behind appearance. Difference, as Deleuze conceives it, has a relation to appearance and thought that is subtler than this. "Individuating difference" must be understood as "preceding matter and form, species and part and every other element of the constituted individual" (DR 38/56). Behind this difference there is nothing. This being of the sensible that is multiple and individuated is not cut off from thought, but rather "forces us to think" (DR 139/182). Being forced to think through a "fundamental encounter" is positioned against the reactive, recognitive, and subject-centered thinking of idealism. Genuine thinking is initiated not by judgment, that is, by the subject's application of concepts in experience, but rather, as we saw previously, by being sensed in a range of "affective tones." These affect the subject and thought in a way that is heterogeneous and heteronymous. Rather than being recognized and comprehended, thought perplexes us precisely because its affective dimension is not assignable into the hierarchy of preassigned concepts. Once we start with this assumption, we can see why Deleuze tries to reconceive thought and selfhood as involving a passive synthesis.

The relation of mind and world is not organized by intentional acts of the conscious subject who employs concepts in acts of mediation that match up concepts and world through a recognitive process. In Deleuze's case this division between subject and world is unable to be policed in this way. The generative process that produces knowledge, meaning, and experience does not operate in accordance with the coordinating activities of the transcendental subject. Formal linguistic structures are also not the basis of knowledge and meaning. The relation between subject, world, language, and ideas, as Deleuze sees them, is very different from this model. His alternative to the subjective model of meaning determination is found in the way he conceives sense and passive synthesis.²⁵ This inversion is not simply an opposition to Hegel and the canons of modern philosophy; his thought

is not motivated by reaction but by an alternative account of the ways in which concepts and ideas are generated as well as how they take hold of thought. He is concerned to provide a model for how thought regenerates itself. He provides a philosophical frame with which to conceive how the genuinely new emerges that is not grounded in self-determining subjects or a self-producing spirit. It is in this context that passive synthesis takes on an important role in his thought, since it allows the sensible to be connected with consciousness and thought more on the model of fluid biological systems than self-determined thought.²⁶

Whatever skepticism Deleuze may have about subjectivity and the epistemological and discursive prejudice of idealism, he still has to connect thought and subjectivity to the transcendental empirical. Were this not the case, his transcendental empirical would be transcendent and thereby totally other to thought and human life. His empiricism does not, as with classical empiricism or the empiricism of analytic philosophy, appeal to direct immediate knowledge or a given to justify knowledge claims. Deleuze's sensible does not have a verifying function in this sense, but it does share with classical empiricists and Kant the idea that consciousness intuits the sensible, that is, that sensory consciousness has some kind of receptive function that impacts on experience. However, the transcendental characterization of the empirical positions it absolutely against the Hegelian position, for which the empirical could have no explanatory potential, precisely because, as we have seen, it is nonconceptual. But the empirical is not passively received in the subject in the way it is in empiricism and in Kantian intuition. Deleuze's passive synthesis is not receptive; the passivity is a system of habituated contractions "that constitutes the organism before it constitutes the sensations" (DR 78/107). Deleuze takes this form of habituated biological organization to be the basis of difference and of self-formation. We do not develop ourselves through acts of individual or collective self-determination or through self-contemplation, but through habits of contemplation, contraction, and satisfaction. This biopsychic system is what allows the system to modify itself, not the reflective acts of self-determining subjects. The inherent diversity and fluidity of this "basic domain" of the subject are what make it multiple.

While Deleuze thinks that the self-determining subject is an illusion of good will, the empirical is not cut off from thought, and this has implications for how he conceives subjectivity. Because the empirical is passively synthesized by the subject, its transformation of thought is unregulated by the standard unifying categories of the philosophical tradition. The uniformity of the transcendental subject and its thought, because they are affected by the sensible, cannot maintain its self-sufficient stability. Difference and singularity are embedded in the character of the subject in a manner that ensures it cannot maintain its claims to coherence and unity. There is no straightforward and chartable way in which singularity and sense affect the subject and thought. They are described variously as provocations and generating problems as well as migrating and swarming. Deleuze's subject could not thereby in any way represent itself to itself in any coherent manner, since differences so conceived are not able to be present to the self as definable conditions or concepts (DR 57/80). They evade such mediations, but they are, by virtue of the unique way he conceives sense and passive synthesis, constitutive determinations of the subject. The biopsychic model he employs to explain the subject opens the subject to diversity in a manner that makes it perpetually self-modifying. This ensures that the subject at issue in Deleuze is multiple rather than stable and unified.

Deleuze uses a great deal of colorful and occasionally scornful language to describe post-Kantian idealism; nevertheless, the focus of his dispute is that conceptual mediation, recognition, representation, and self-determination do not allow the genuine opening of being onto difference. Deleuze makes a neat division between tyrannical systems with self-determining subjects at their core and a diffused transcendental empirical that is not self-regulating. Hegel would recognize in Deleuze's approach an aspiration to preserve the empirical without it being either an unknowable given or a thing-in-itself, but Hegel would think that the problem was far better framed *not* by reconceiving it as a transcendental empirical that is other to thought, but rather by keeping it as something minimally discursive. To conceive such a field in any other way threatens the idea of self-determination. Deleuze wants his empirical field to not be cut off from thought, but its pathway into thought is necessarily diffuse and diverse for all the

reasons we have seen above. However, for Hegel the transcendental empirical must be outside our collective sense-making practices and as such is literally inconceivable as a determinate domain beyond thought, because only something within the public space of reasons could have any explanatory or determinate potential; all else is crude metaphysics or the given. At this level there is simply an impasse in their approaches. This is because of their very different attitudes to self-determination.

As we have seen, Hegel wants to bring dynamism and motion to his subject. But this motion is framed for him through the language of determinate negation. The negative serves spirit's and the subject's self-correcting transformation; the subject finds itself and moves forward through dismemberment. Despite this self-correcting trajectory, Hegel does not produce a stable self-identical subject but a subject that knows itself to be in transition and that knows that the conditions of its own self-reference are in transition. In Deleuze's case, the modern ideal of self-determination is no longer sustainable; it requires a differently conceived subject, one that is not the stable focus of this world set in motion, because for him the motion comes from the empirical and the modes of organization of the habituated self, not from a self-determined modern spirit. Even though Hegel's subject is not self-identical, it still harbors an aspiration to self-comprehension (despite the world being in motion) that in principle assumes that it is able to make sense of the conditions that are constitutive of its identity. In Deleuze's case the movement of global capital and trade, the shifting allegiances of modern society and politics, and the wholesale transformation of cultural life in the modern world mean that the animating German idealist concern, that a subject could be at home with itself in modern life, is a philosophical project that is inadequate to late capitalism. We are perpetually displaced by such events and we need a conception of subjectivity that is adequate to a fractured and fluid world.

CONCLUSION

DESCARTES FOUNDED MODERN philosophy by attempting to free philosophy from its presuppositions and its premodern certainties. But the method of doubt that Descartes employed to free himself from his and the tradition's presuppositions required that he seek certainty for his reflections. He had to find a ground by which to anchor the new certainties. Descartes offers the rational subject as the authority for the new rigorous meanings that his system would establish. The self-certainty of the Cartesian cogito has cast a long shadow over the philosophical tradition. It has become the model of the thinking of the subject—self-identical and certain—through the tradition up to Husserl. Heidegger argues that with Descartes, reason, unlike in earlier philosophy, issues from the mind of the thinking subject and not from the world. While this subject may be certain of its own thinking and its own capacity for rational judgment, it does not have certainty of the external world.

This establishes the philosophical challenge: to secure the certainty of objects. According to Heidegger, the way the tradition, since Descartes, attempted to secure the world was to seek the enduring features of objects. This program brings with it a transformation in the idea of the subject, from a self to a knowing subject who is at the center of all inquiry, and whose knowledge of objects is representational. For an object to stand before the

subject, the subject must also stand before itself, because in the act of representation I am placing an object before myself. Self-consciousness is therefore the condition by which an object can be before the self. All objects *are* only insofar as they can be put before a subject and mastered. The form that this representation takes is calculative. What can count as knowledge—what endures—is something that can be measured.

A cluster of concepts has come to be associated with Descartes's cogito: self-determination, self-consciousness, and self-reflection. All of them are expressions of subjectivity that poststructuralism has claimed a pressing need to overcome. How this shift occurs, from self-consciousness and self-determination being considered the animating concepts of modern philosophy and the high point of human self-realization to the wholesale critique of them, has its origin in poststructuralism's acceptance of Heidegger's critique of the metaphysics of subjectivity. The philosophy of the subject has become shorthand for all the deficiencies of Western philosophy. This has led to a widespread concern in the contemporary humanities with "overcoming the subject," "killing the subject," "displacing it for the other," and so on. Heidegger's critique of the metaphysics of the subject places the knowing subject at the center of every major branch of philosophy, from Descartes to Nietzsche.

Heidegger's argument for reading modern philosophy as the metaphysics of presence defines the approach that Derrida and Deleuze take toward German idealism. Heidegger's engagement with German idealism is varied and complex. Derrida and Deleuze, however, take primarily those aspects of Heidegger's interpretation of Hegel that present him as the culmination of the metaphysics of presence. The idea of presence has a special place in this context. It marks the idea that the subject's primary relationship to the world is one of knowing, and that with the right concepts and method one could make present to oneself the way in which being is. On this view, being is subject-relative, since all meanings of it issue from the human mind. It is clear therefore that any challenge to the order of knowledge of modernity requires a dislocation of the epistemic subject.

Accordingly, the strategy of poststructuralism is to contest the core ideas of modernity by undermining the exclusivity of their claims to authority and

the seat of that authority—the subject. Derrida and Deleuze question the ideals of a unitary and comprehensive knowledge. They do this not by positioning poststructuralism as the next philosophical era that corrects the prior one, but by supplementing the tradition's existing concepts with a new suite of concepts and by showing that the putative coherence of this philosophical program presupposes concepts and relations that undermine its coherence and the universality of its claims. Deleuze and Derrida both give expression to sites of difference, sources of multiplicity, and individuations that attempt to present the dynamism, instability, openness, and heterogeneity of thought. This approach is mirrored in their reflections on subjectivity.

Derrida and Deleuze and indeed all the core figures of poststructuralism, despite their concern with the limits of self-consciousness, adopt a far more strategic relation to their own attempts to transform it. None has the modernist self-confidence that would allow them to claim that their approach is the next great philosophical advance on philosophy's self-correcting path. The strategy they adopt in their critique of the tradition is of a very different order. It strives to undermine the coherence and integrity of the modernist hubris by showing the unquestioned assumptions and the limitations of the texts. Their proposal to reconsider subjectivity is consistent with this strategy; the subject ought to be decentered, individuated, and noncoincident. All of these terms are defined against Hegelian self-consciousness and the dialectic.

The debates, tensions, and dualisms (the concept/intuition distinction, the limits of reason, the rational legitimation of norms, and so on) that emerge in the wake of Kant's critical thought are the defining problematics for much of what follows in German idealism, but they also structure many of the key concerns of poststructuralism. Both Deleuze and Derrida recognize that Hegel responds to deficiencies in Kant's critical thought. Both argue, however, that Hegel's thought "corrects" these problems by reviving a robust pre-Kantian metaphysics. I have argued in this book that Deleuze and Derrida fail to understand the distinctive manner in which Hegel's thought is post-Kantian.

Hegel, as we have seen, takes himself to be continuing key aspects of the Enlightenment. He accepts the critique of all forms of dogmatism and the idea that the world is irrevocably set in motion by virtue of thought's

capacity for self-correction. Kant and Fichte extend the Enlightenment project in a manner that gave it even greater rigor. They shifted the discussion to the more elemental question of how reason could be self-authorizing, that is, how reason could ground its own authority. Hegel is a post-Kantian thinker insofar as he accepts this project. This, however, does not mean that he rejected the romantic critique of Fichte and Kant. The romantic critique of Fichte argued that the self-positing subject reduced being and experience to the form of the I (to self-consciousness). Romanticism also claimed that the Kantian privileging of rationality appeared to exclude and delegitimize all nonrational forms of life. In order to establish some order of being that was not simply a posit of the subject, Hölderlin proposed a more primordial unity. It was the ground of all meaning and self-consciousness, but of which there was no discursive access. It was determinative but unknowable. Hegel could not, however, accept the romantic correction of Kant's project—that there was some more primordial unity that makes our self-consciousness and knowing possible, but of which there could be no explicit knowledge. The idea of a prereflective unity that was outside thought was not a viable response. Hegel was committed to the idea of self-determination and could not countenance isolating thought from being.

The only way to avoid the dualism of mind and world, which was the inevitable consequence of Kant's concept/intuition distinction, was to expand the role of the discursive. Intuitions could not be conceived as directly received from the sensuous world without positing a rival realm of truth to the discursive to which we had no access. For Hegel, the only viable response to the consequent dualism of mind and world was therefore to assert that the whole was self-determining. Hegel had no alternative than to conceive the whole as self-determined. However, he did this in a way that incorporated elements of the romantic critique of the Enlightenment and the diversity of nonrational aspects of human life that they sought to legitimate. Spirit, shapes of spirit, and self-consciousness were conceived with this in mind, but in such a way that spirit could include diverse and determinative aspects of human life that were not strictly rational. History, thought, and culture develop shapes of life; Hegel's concern was to show how the norms of a culture become authoritative for a subject, and how

these are expressed in an individual's (and a culture's) habits, practices, and judgments. (Hegel is also centrally concerned with how those norms lose their authority.)

The *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Philosophy of Right* present norms and concepts as shapes of spirit or forms of life. In his discussion of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*), in both of these works, Hegel presents norms as habits, that is, as second nature dispositions to act that are cultivated by diverse but interrelated features of every society. In ethical life, Hegel describes the ways in which norms are embedded in and produced by a social order. Norms get their force, for the most part, not from rational reflection, but through the complex ways cultures are able to establish an identification of the subject with those norms. The authority of norms, their force, is generally not produced through acts of autonomous self-governance. This does not, however, place those norms outside the space of reasons. The norms still have to be considered as collective achievements of human culture and history. This has implications for Hegelian subjectivity. The discursive field in its self-transforming totality frames human thinking. That whole is always ahead of itself because those concepts are constantly being transformed by virtue of the dynamism of spirit. As we have seen, the structure of Hegelian self-consciousness reflects that dynamism. This means that Hegelian self-consciousness and self-understanding can never be self-identical, since the whole is always already beyond where the subject knowingly takes itself to be at any point in time. Hegel's subject is self-differentiating and necessarily noncoincident. Whether or not this self-differentiation is adequate to contemporary subjectivity is indeed a debate worth having. That debate has not so far taken place with poststructuralism because its inability to regard Hegel's subject as anything other than an expression of the metaphysics of presence has precluded such an examination.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. For an overview of the emergence of the post-Kantian Hegel, see Lumsden, "The Rise of the Non-Metaphysical Hegel," *Philosophy Compass* 3, no. 1 (2008): 51–65.
2. Bruce Baugh, while also emphasizing the importance of German idealism for poststructuralism, argues that the interpretation of Hegel's "Unhappy Consciousness" section of the *Phenomenology* is the defining influence on poststructuralism. See Baugh, *French Hegel: From Surrealism to Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 2003).
3. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (London: Routledge, 2001).
4. See the important work on this by Robert Richards, *The Romantic Conception of Life: Science and Philosophy in the Age of Goethe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
5. I take this phrase from Terry Pinkard. See Pinkard, "Normes, faits et formes de vie dans la *Phénoménologie de l'Esprit*," in *Lectures contemporaines de la "Phénoménologie de l'Esprit"*, ed. Marie Andrée Ricard and Dario Perinetti (Paris: Presses Universitaires France, 2009), 129–79.
6. Robert Pippin, *Modernism as a Philosophical Problem: On the Dissatisfactions of European High Culture* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).
7. See Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy, 1760–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
8. Frederick Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).
9. The exception is of course Derrida's heirs: Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in German Romanticism*, trans. P. Barnard and C. Lester (Albany: SUNY Press, 1988).

10. Charles Larmore, *The Romantic Legacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
11. See Frederick Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism: The Genesis of Modern German Political Thought, 1790–1800* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), chap. 9.
12. Larmore, *The Romantic Legacy*, 38–39.
13. See Frederick Beiser, *Enlightenment, Revolution, and Romanticism*.
14. For a detailed and compelling examination of this era, see Dalia Nassar, *The Romantic Absolute: Being and Knowing in Early German Romantic Philosophy, 1795–1804* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013).
15. While Foucault's most pronounced influence is Nietzsche, Heidegger's thought was important for Foucault. See the clear and persuasive discussion in Timothy Rayner, *Foucault's Heidegger* (London: Continuum, 2007); and Hubert Dreyfus, "Being and Power: Heidegger and Foucault," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 4, no. 1 (1996): 1–16.
16. For an insightful discussion of the influence of Heidegger on Deleuze, see Daniel W. Smith, "The Doctrine of Univocity: Deleuze's Ontology of Immanence," in *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).
17. Axel Honneth also traces these two trajectories, but he does not see the importance of Heidegger for the development of the poststructuralist concern with subjectivity. See Axel Honneth, *The Fragmented World of the Social: Essays in Social and Political Philosophy*, ed. Charles Wright (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), esp. chap. 16.
18. See Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); and Derrida "Structure, Sign, and Play," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).
19. Gary Gutting, *French Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
20. See Jacques Derrida, "Sending: On Representation," *Social Research* 49, no. 2 (1982): 294–326.
21. Martin Heidegger, "Hegel and the Greeks," in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 325.
22. Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).
23. See Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Michael Roth, *Knowing and History: Appropriations of Hegel in Twentieth Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988); Bruce Baugh, *French Hegel*.
24. Jean Hyppolite, *Logic and Existence*, trans. L. Lawlor and A. Sen (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997). This translation also includes a review of the book by Deleuze.
25. See Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), chap. 2.
26. Robert Pippin and Terry Pinkard are the most prominent interpreters to take this position. See, for example, Robert Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy*.

1. THE METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE AND THE WORLDLESS SUBJECT

27. Many fine works have been published on this era in recent years, all of which are also major interventions in the interpretation of German idealism. See William F. Bristow, *Hegel and the Transformation of Philosophical Critique* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); Eckardt Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy: A Systematic Reconstruction*, trans. Brady Bowman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).
28. Frederick Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002).
29. Daniel W. Smith, "Genesis and Difference: Deleuze, Maimon, and the Post-Kantian Reading of Leibniz," in *Deleuze and the Fold: A Critical Reader*, ed. S. Tuinen and N. McDonnell (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). For a detailed analysis of the importance of Maimon for Deleuze's thought work, see Daniella Voss, *Conditions of Thought: Deleuze and Transcendental Ideas* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013).
30. Pinkard, *German Philosophy*.
31. The only possible exception is Jean-Luc Nancy. His idiosyncratic interpretation of Hegel is certainly compatible with seeing Hegel as a post-Kantian. See Nancy, *Hegel: The Restlessness of the Negative*, trans. Jason Smith and Steven Miller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).
32. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. Sheridan (New York: Harper and Row, 1972). The influence of Hegel on Foucault has not been widely discussed in the literature. For a clear discussion, see Gary Gutting, "Foucault, Hegel, and Philosophy," in *Foucault and Philosophy*, ed. Timothy O'Leary and Chris Falzon (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 19–36.
33. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 40–41.
34. There are few sustained examinations of Hegel and poststructuralism. Interest in the relation between Hegel and Deleuze has recently emerged. See Henry Somers-Hall, *Hegel, Deleuze and the Critique of Representation: Dialectics of Negation and Difference* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012); and Karen Houle and James Vernon, eds., *Hegel and Deleuze: Together Again for the First Time* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2013).

1. THE METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE AND THE WORLDLESS SUBJECT

1. Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," in *Basic Writings*, ed. and trans. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 332.
2. For an overview see Daniel Dahlstrom, "Heidegger and German Idealism," in *A Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2005), 65–79.
3. Other authors that have traced the Hegel poststructuralism connection are: Bruce Baugh, *French Hegel* (London: Routledge, 2003); Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy*,

1. THE METAPHYSICS OF PRESENCE AND THE WORLDLESS SUBJECT

- trans. L. Scott Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); and Michael Roth, *Knowing and History: Appropriations of Hegel in Twentieth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988).
4. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. David Farrell Krell (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1987), 3:22.
5. AWP 5.
6. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 3:66.
7. See BT 60 and BP 126.
8. Hegel, as will be discussed in chapter 3, makes a very similar criticism of Kant.
9. Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Ted Sadler (London: Continuum, 2002), 76–78. Based on a text of a lecture course given in Freiburg in 1930.
10. For a comprehensive and very clear discussion of the role presence plays in Heidegger's interpretation of modern philosophy, see David Carr, *The Paradox of Subjectivity: The Self in the Transcendental Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Carr defends Kant and Husserl from Heidegger's critique of them as metaphysicians of presence.
11. Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 6–8.
12. *Ibid.*, 6.
13. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 3:225, my emphasis.
14. Heidegger, "Hegel's Concept of Experience," in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans K. Haynes and J. Young (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 101.
15. *Ibid.*, 121; see also *ibid.*, 106.
16. *Ibid.*, 126.
17. *Ibid.*, 151.
18. See Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 77; Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 3:220–21.
19. Heidegger, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, 78.
20. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 3:221.

2. FICHTE'S STRIVING SUBJECT

1. In a letter to Reinhold, Fichte boasted that his "philosophy should be expounded in an infinite number of ways" (EPW 417).
2. For extracts of Schulze's and Maimon's works in English, see H. S. Harris and George di Giovanni, eds. and trans., *Between Kant and Hegel: Texts in the Development of Post-Kantian Idealism* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1985). The importance of Maimon for the development of post-Kantian philosophy has been discussed by Karl Ameriks, *Kant and the Fate of Autonomy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Frederick Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002); as well as Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987); and Peter Thielke, "Getting Maimon's

- Goad: Discursivity, Skepticism, and Fichte's Idealism," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 39, no. 1 (2001): 101–34; Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).
3. This view of Fichte lives on in much of the poststructuralist literature. See, for example, Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 19. Heidegger portrays Fichte in just this way (GA28 53, 65–68). See Daniel Dahlstrom, "Heidegger and German Idealism," in *A Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 65–79.
 4. See the detailed and insightful discussion of dogmatism and inclination in Daniel Breazeale, "How to Refute an Idealist: Fichte's Refutation of Dogmatism and the Problem of the Starting Point of the *Wissenschaftslehre*," *Philosophical Forum* 19, no. 2–3 (1987–88): 97–123.
 5. For a detailed discussion of the import of these figures for the development of post-Kantian idealism, see Frederick Beiser, *German Idealism*; Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005); and Eckart Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy: A Systematic Reconstruction*, trans. Brady Bowman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).
 6. "Instead of seeking two entirely difference sources of representation in the understanding and the sensibility, which could judge about things with objective validity only in conjunction, each of these great men holds only to one of them, which in his opinion is immediately related to things in themselves" (CPR A271/B327).
 7. For a detailed discussion of Fichte's account of objectivity, see Wayne Martin, *Idealism and Objectivity: Understanding Fichte's Jena Project* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997); and Thielke, "Getting Maimon's Goad."
 8. A strongly metaphysical reading of Fichte is presented in the work of Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7 (Westminster, Md.: Newman Press, 1964); and much more crudely in Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963).
 9. Beiser, *German Idealism*.
 10. Robert Pippin, "Fichte's Alleged Subjective, Psychological, One-Sided Idealism," in *The Reception of Kant's Critical Philosophy: Fichte, Schelling and Hegel*, ed. Sally Sedgwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 147–69.
 11. Fichte's attack on dogmatism is also an implicit criticism of the role of intuition in Kant, which Fichte understands as a causal relation.
 12. See IWL 20–23/SWI 435–37.
 13. IWL 85–86/SWI 500. See the discussion of this in Martin, *Idealism and Objectivity*, esp. chap. 2.
 14. See Beiser, *German Idealism*, 248–52.
 15. For a more detailed discussion of the importance of this in the development of German idealism, see Daniel Breazeale, "Between Kant and Fichte: Karl Leonhard Reinhold's Elementary Philosophy," *Review of Metaphysics* 35, no. 4 (1982): 785–822; and Breazeale, "Fichte's

2. FICHTE'S STRIVING SUBJECT

- Aenesidemus* Review and the Transformation of German Idealism," *Review of Metaphysics* 34, no. 3 (1981): 545–68; and Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, 266–84; and Beiser, *German Idealism*.
16. Reinhold, "Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge," in Harris and di Giovanni, *Between Kant and Hegel*, 67, my emphasis.
17. *Ibid.*, 70.
18. See Harris and di Giovanni, *Between Kant and Hegel*, for an extract from Schulze's *Aenesidemus* in English.
19. Reinhold, "Foundation of Philosophical Knowledge," 70.
20. For a discussion of the way the early Fichte transforms the Kantian notion of *Darstellung* as a step to overcoming the limitations of the weaknesses of representationalism, see Martha Helfer, *Retreat of Representation: The Concept of Darstellung in German Critical Discourse* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 65–68.
21. See also SK 93/SW1 91.
22. *Tathandlung* is literally "fact-act" (*Tat-Handlung*).
23. IWL 112–13/SW1 527. There has been a lot of debate about this issue in response to Dieter Henrich's claim that Fichte demonstrates the weaknesses of the reflective model of consciousness but does not himself, in the end, escape from the same problem. See Dieter Henrich, "Fichte's Original Insight," in *Contemporary German Philosophy*, trans. David R. Lachterman, ed. Darrel E. Christensen (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982), 1:15–53. For further defenses of Fichte against this, see Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism: The Satisfactions of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Martin, *Idealism and Objectivity*; and Frederick Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
24. For detailed examinations of this, see Förster, *The Twenty-Five Years of Philosophy*, chaps. 6–7; Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity*, chap. 3.
25. EPW 105/SW1 41–42.
26. See the discussion of this issue in Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity*, 44–46. The first principle is developed into three related principles, positing, counterpositing, and limitation. See Günter Zöller, *Fichte's Transcendental Philosophy: The Original Duplicity of Intelligence and Will* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), chap. 3.
27. SK 97/SW1 96.
28. See the discussion of this in Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity*, 111–15.
29. See IWL 56/SW1 472. On the importance of the transcendental unity of apperception for post-Kantian idealism, see Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*.
30. See the discussion in IWL 50–51/SW1 466–68.
31. Whether or not the I has a foundational status has been a contentious point in Fichte scholarship: see Tom Rockmore, "Antifoundationalism, Circularity, and the Spirit of Fichte," in *Fichte Historical Contexts/Contemporary Controversies*, ed. Tom Rockmore and Daniel Breazeale (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1994), 96–112.
32. FTP 181.
33. Intellectual intuition is tied to sensible intuition, since consciousness has to be directed at something other than itself. See Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity*, 79.

34. Fichte distinguishes self-awareness from self-consciousness. See IWL 42, 58, 106–7/SW_I 459, 473–74, 522; and Neuhauser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity*, 75ff.
35. See Zöllner, *Fichte's Transcendental Philosophy*, 34–35.
36. Intellectual intuition is the “immediate consciousness that I act and of what I do when I act” (IWL 46/SW_I 463).
37. See the discussion of this in Zöllner, *Fichte's Transcendental Philosophy*, 29.
38. See FTP 95.
39. See EPW 73–74/SW_I 20–21.
40. The first principle: “The self begins by an absolute [*schlechtthin*] positing of its own existence [Sein]” (SK 99/ SW_I 98).
41. SK 190/SW_I 211.
42. See IWL 69–71/SW_I 483–86.
43. “The self is merely set in motion by this opponent, in order that it may act; without such an external prime mover it would never have acted, . . . [and] would never have existed either” (SK 246/SW_I 279).
44. See IWL 75/SW_I 490. In later works Fichte extends the notion of the check to include an intersubjective dimension to the issue. In FTP he introduces the idea that the impetus for the I's self-determination could also be understood as a summons (*Aufforderung*) by an other. Whether or not one understands the check as another person or as an object does not, within the framework of Fichte's system, change the issues involved here. For discussions of the role of the *Aufforderung* and intersubjectivity generally in Fichte's thought, see Jürgen Stolzenberg, “Fichtes Begriff des Praktischen Selbstbewußtseins,” in *Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre 1794*, ed. Wolfram Hogrebe (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1995), 71–95. Stolzenberg in this paper positions Fichte in relation to Habermas and Mead. See also Beiser, *German Idealism*, 334–49; Daniel Breazeale, “Check or Checkmate? On the Finitude of the Fichtean Self,” in *The Modern Subject: Conceptions of the Self in Classical German Philosophy*, ed. Karl Ameriks and Dieter Sturma (Albany: SUNY Press, 1995), 96–98; Reinhard Lauth, “Das Problem der Interpersonalität bei Fichte,” in *Transzendente Entwicklungslinien von Descartes bis zu Marx und Dostojewski* (Hamburg: Meiner, 1989); and Robert R. Williams, *Tragedy, Recognition, and the Death of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For a persuasive and clear analysis of the intersubjective character of recognition in Fichte, see Heikki Ikäheimo, *Anerkennung* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2014).
45. See IWL 74–75/SW_I 489.
46. This is why check is not really an adequate translation for *Anstoss*, since it also has the sense of impetus, which is how it has also been translated, though impetus does not really capture the constraint involved.
47. See Breazeale, “Check or Checkmate?,” 94.
48. See IWL 76/SW_I 491.
49. “[Longing] also evinces a drive to reality (as restricted), since it is felt and not thought or represented” (SK 280/SW_I 320). See the very clear discussion of this issue in Paul Redding, *The Logic of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), chap. 5; and Wolfram Hogrebe, “Sehnsucht und Erkenntnis,” in Hogrebe, *Fichtes Wissenschaftslehre 1794*, 50–67.

50. See Daniel Breazeale, "Check or Checkmate?," 95.
51. The "empirical I which we observe from the transcendental standpoint does indeed provide itself with an explanation of its own feelings" (IWL 75/SW_I 490). See also SK 246–47/SW_I 280.
52. Breazeale argues that while the check is a realist constraint it is still "only a fact about the mind," in Breazeale, "Check or Checkmate?," 99. I think this claim overstates Fichte's position, even in terms of Breazeale's own clear and convincing presentation of the issues involved.
53. W 404. English translation: *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Robert Brown (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 3:234. See Beiser's discussion of this and his defense of Fichte: Beiser, *German Idealism*, 316–18.
54. Heidegger considers this to be a remarkably insightful analysis of the finitude of Dasein, but he thinks it is undercut by the systematic claims of the work. See GA28 91 and Dahlstrom's brief but important discussion of this in "Heidegger and German Idealism."
55. Beiser, *German Idealism*.
56. Like Pippin, Breazeale, and Martin, Terry Pinkard argues for the centrality of the explanatory and normative concerns of the *Wissenschaftslehre*. He argues that Fichte's concerns with self-limitation are essentially normative concerns. Nevertheless, he parts company with the others in presenting him in a more Platonist light than these other approaches. He argues that those self-legislated norms "get things right": "In intellectual intuition we are not, that is, grasping the *mode* of apprehending reality or the way we use *words*; we are apprehending the necessary structure of reality itself." Pinkard, *German Philosophy, 1760–1860: The Legacy of Idealism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 110.
57. Pippin, "Fichte's Alleged Subjective," 156.
58. *Ibid.*, 157.
59. See the discussion of this in Beiser, *German Idealism*, 220, 313–20.
60. See the discussion of this issue in Pinkard, *German Philosophy*, chap. 5: "We simply had to grasp through an act of 'intellectual intuition' that our thought could be subject only to those norms of which it could regard itself the author." *Ibid.*, 112.
61. Pippin does however argue that this project will fail: "It will turn out that such an absolute self-grounding is, finally, impossible and will provoke the famous *streben* issue." Pippin, "Fichte's Alleged Subjective," 157.
62. Beiser, *German Idealism*, 317.
63. There is strong resemblance here between this movement and the method of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* as outlined in its introduction.
64. This aspect of the *Wissenschaftslehre* contrasts with Pinkard's claim that "in intellectual intuition, our thought of things in themselves gets them exactly right without any residue left over on their part." Pinkard, *German Philosophy*, 111.
65. Beiser, *German Idealism*, 271, my emphasis.
66. *Ibid.*, 312.
67. See the discussion of this in Zöller, *Fichte's Transcendental Philosophy*, 33.
68. SK 242–44/SW_I 275–77.
69. SK 258–59/SW_I 294.

3. HEGEL

70. The discussion of how the drive becomes inclination is in SK 283/SW_I 325. For a detailed discussion of the role of drives in Fichte's thought, see Reinhard Loock, "Gefühl und Realität," *Fichte-Studien* 10 (1997): 227ff. See also Zöller, *Fichte's Transcendental Philosophy*, esp. 66–67, for a discussion of the various uses of drive in Fichte.
71. SK 240/SW_I 272.
72. For some authors Fichte's explicit discussion of ethics is a more productive place to look in order to better understand the relation of feeling and ideality. See Virginia López-Domínguez, "Die Deduktion des Gefühls in des Grundlage der Gesamten Wisssheschaftslehre," *Fichte-Studien* 10 (1997): 209–19; and Pascale De Carla, "Die Trieblehre bei Fichte," *Fichte-Studien* 6 (1994): 229–51.
73. FTP §13. See also the discussion of the need to harmonize the will and feeling for genuine moral action in "Some Lectures Concerning the Scholars Vocation" in EPW 148–53/SW6 296–301. Breazeale, in "How to Refute an Idealist," gives a compelling illustration of why Fichte is concerned with unifying feeling and reason. His discussion analyzes Fichte's seemingly flippant remarks about "the kind of philosophy that one chooses thus depends upon the kind of person one is" (IWL 20/SW_I 434).
74. In the "Lectures Concerning the Scholar's Vocation," Fichte argues that the I strives to modify those things upon which feeling, which is not free, depends. He argues that the harmony of feeling and rationality is possible not through the will alone, but through practice, and "the skill to suppress and eradicate those erroneous inclinations which originate in us prior to the awakening of our reason . . . is called culture." EPW 150/SW6 298.
75. Neuhouser, *Fichte's Theory of Subjectivity*, chap. 4, gives a good clear account of Fichte's transformation of Kantian morality.
76. In the discussion of inclination at the end of the *Science of Knowledge*, drive can be understood as determinate and determinant. The I feels itself determined by the drive, but through its reflective capacity it can determine the drive by affirming it or rejecting it.
77. Intellectual intuition tries to capture the ways in which such a self-affirmation is present in all judging and knowing.
78. A very clear and evocative sense of this is presented in Pinkard, *German Philosophy*.
79. In the *Foundations of Natural Right*, he says: "The I is not something that has capacities [*Vermögen*], it is not a capacity at all, but rather is active; it is what it does, and when it does nothing, it is nothing." SW₃ 22/Fichte, *Foundations of Natural Right*, trans. Michael Baur, ed. Frederick Neuhouser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 23.
80. Breazeale has articulated this divided character of the I in a number of papers: see Breazeale, "Philosophy and the Divided Self," *Fichte-Studien* 6 (1994): 117–48; and Breazeale, "Check or Checkmate?"

3. HEGEL

1. Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 69.

2. Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 87.
3. Paul Guyer in recent years has kept this crudely metaphysical picture “alive.” See Guyer, “Absolute Idealism and the Rejection of the Kantian Dualism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, ed. Karl Ameriks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 37.
4. See, for example, Robert Pippin, *Hegel’s Idealism: The Satisfaction of Self-Consciousness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Terry Pinkard, *Hegel’s Phenomenology: The Sociality of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Paul Redding, *Hegel’s Hermeneutics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).
5. Klaus Hartmann, “Hegel: A Non Metaphysical View,” in *Hegel: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Alasdair MacIntyre (London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972).
6. John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994), 11.
7. The way Hegel avoids logical coherentism has seen a rise in analytic interest in Hegel’s thought. See John McDowell, *Mind and World*; Paul Redding, *Hegel and Analytic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
8. For an extensive discussion of the various protagonists in this debate, see Sally Sedgwick, *Hegel’s Critique of Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
9. For a good summary of these various positions, see Sally Sedgwick, “Hegel, McDowell, and Recent Defenses of Kant,” *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 31, no. 2 (2000): 229–47.
10. I take this differentiation from Lorne Falkenstein, “Kant’s Account of Intuition,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 21, no. 2 (1991): 165–93.
11. Kant, *Theoretical Philosophy, 1755–1770*, trans. David Walford (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 384.
12. Henry Allison, *Kant’s Transcendental Idealism: An Interpretation and Defense* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), 16.
13. *Ibid.*, 12.
14. Hegel, *System of Ethical Life and First Philosophy of Spirit*, trans. H. S. Harris and T. M. Knox (Albany: SUNY Press, 1979), 224–25.
15. Henry Allison, *Essays on Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 95. Among those who argue that Hegel’s reading of Kant is not as straightforward as this, see, for example, Sedgwick, *Hegel’s Critique of Kant*; William Bristow, *Hegel and the Transformation of Philosophical Critique* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Paul Franks, *All or Nothing: Systematicity, Transcendental Arguments, and Skepticism in German Idealism* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2005).
16. For a thorough defense of Hegel against these claims, see Sedgwick, “Hegel, McDowell, and Recent Defenses of Kant.” She elaborates these issues in *Hegel’s Critique of Kant*.
17. See FK 77.
18. See Sedgwick, “Hegel, McDowell, and Recent Defenses of Kant.”
19. See Manfred Frank, “Fragments of a History of a Theory of Self-Consciousness from Kant to Kierkegaard,” *Critical Horizons: A Journal of Philosophy and Social Theory* 5, no. 1 (2004): 53–136; and Dieter Henrich, “Fichte’s Original Insight,” in *Contemporary German*

3. HEGEL

- Philosophy*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. Darrel E. Christensen (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1982).
20. Henrich, "Fichte's Original Insight," 21.
 21. See the discussion of this in Franks, *All or Nothing*, 368–70.
 22. For an extensive discussion of this issue, see Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*.
 23. For a clear discussion of this issue and its importance for Hegel, see Bristow, *Hegel and the Transformation of Philosophical Critique*, 35–38.
 24. See Terry Pinkard, "Hegel's *Phenomenology* and *Logic*: An Overview," in *The Cambridge Companion to German Idealism*, ed. Karl Ameriks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 177; Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*; Sedgwick, *Hegel's Critique of Kant*.
 25. Dieter Henrich, *Between Kant and Hegel: Lectures on German Idealism*, ed. David S. Pacini (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 305.
 26. See also the discussion of this in Terry Pinkard, "Hegel's *Phenomenology* and *Logic*," 162–63.
 27. McDowell, *Mind and World*. Joseph Flay describes this in a similar way as "praxical presuppositions" in Flay, *Hegel's Quest for Certainty* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1984).
 28. This position has been most forcefully argued by William Maker, *Philosophy Without Foundations: Rethinking Hegel* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), chap. 4.
 29. *Ibid.*, 69.
 30. *Ibid.*, chap. 4.
 31. For a detailed examination of this issue, see Lumsden, "Absolute Knowing," *Owl of Minerva* 30, no. 1 (1998): 3–32.
 32. Cf. PhS §788/GW9 516.
 33. This, as we will see below, is the consequence of Hegel's overturning of the concept/intuition dualism.
 34. See Hegel's comments on Kantian apperception in the introduction to the "Doctrine of the Concept" in SL.
 35. Cf. PhS §788/GW9 516.
 36. For a fuller examination of the nature of the reconciliation of consciousness and self-consciousness that emerges in absolute knowing and that underpins this reoriented self-understanding, see Lumsden, "Absolute Knowing."
 37. Commentators who take this view include Pippin, *Hegel's Idealism*; and Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Phenomenology*; Paul Redding, *Hegel's Hermeneutics*. There are many others who fall broadly into this camp. For a detailed discussion, see Lumsden, "The Rise of the Non-Metaphysical Hegel," *Philosophy Compass* 3, no. 1 (2008): 51–65.
 38. It is far better conceived as Robert Pippin describes it, as the evolution of a "common like-mindedness." Pippin, *The Persistence of Subjectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12.
 39. Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy, 1760–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 258.
 40. Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 344.

3. HEGEL

- 4 1. See Pinkard, *German Philosophy*, and Robert Brandom, "Some Pragmatist Themes in Hegel's Idealism," *European Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 2 (1999): 164–89.

4. HEIDEGGER, CARE, AND SELFHOOD

1. See the discussion of this issue in Terry Pinkard, *German Philosophy, 1760–1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
2. See Charles Larmore, *The Romantic Legacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).
3. I have generally used the Macquarrie and Robinson translation from 1962, though I have made numerous amendments to the translation. All references are to the German pagination, since both English translations provide the German page numbers in the margin. These descriptions of Dasein can be found on pages 116, 127, 179.
4. There is a great deal of discussion in the literature about how to translate *das Man*. Translating it as "the They" is contested as it sets *das Man* over against Dasein; many authors prefer "the One." My preference is for the One; however, this creates problems when translating *das Man-selbst*, which would then be "one-self" which would be very confusing in English. For *das Man-selbst* the best translation is "they-self"; "anyone-self" is too awkward. I have left the term untranslated.
5. Johannes Fritsche argues that authentic Dasein is established precisely to counter *das Man*. It serves to cancel civil society in order to establish a new coherence in the *Volkgemeinschaft*. While I think that the critique of civil society and the competitive vanity of modern society is clear in Heidegger, the alignment of *das Man* precisely with "civilized man" cannot be sustained. See Fritsche, "Competition and Conformity: Heidegger on Distantiality and the 'They' in *Being and Time*," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 24, no. 2 (2003): 75–107.
6. The most well-known discussion of this issue is by Hubert Dreyfus. See Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's "Being and Time"* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991).
7. "Disposition" is how Kisiel translates this term. It is a less awkward translation than Macquarrie and Robinson's "state-of-mind."
8. Rudolf Bernet says the world of *das Man* "is a common rather than a shared world." Bernet, "Phenomenological Reduction and the Double Life of the Subject," in *Reading Heidegger from the Start*, ed. John van Buren and Theodore Kisiel (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 262. By this he means it is not intersubjective.
9. "*Das Man* dictates . . . the mode of being of everyday Dasein" (HCT 245).
10. Letting oneself be "determined by others" is "to exist *inauthentically* by existing primarily in forgetfulness of its own self" (BP 170). Inauthenticity is "not as we are at bottom able to be own to ourselves" (BP 160).
11. "Constancy" is in parentheses in the text. This is because Dasein's *Man*-self is actually described later in the text as inconstant. See BT 391.
12. *Selbst-ständig* is used, for example, by idealists like Fichte to describe the self-determining character of Dasein. Heidegger is using the term very differently.

13. "The Self, however, is proximally and for the most part inauthentic, the *Man-self*" (BT 181); see also BT 129. See the discussion of Dasein's self-forgetful character in Rudi Visker, "Dropping—The 'Subject' of Authenticity," in *Deconstructive Subjectivities*, ed. Simon Critchley and Peter Dews (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996). Cf. BT 126–27, 322–23.
14. As authentic Dasein chooses "itself on purpose and *determines its existence* primarily and chiefly starting from that choice" (BP 170, my emphasis).
15. I have chosen to translate *vereinzel* as "individuate" rather than as "individualize," since the latter gives too much the impression of an individual human being.
16. See the discussion of this in Werner Marx, *Heidegger and the Tradition*, trans. Theodore Kisiel and Murray Greene (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1971), 97–98.
17. There is an extensive discussion of the essential solitude of Dasein and of philosophy's quest to be at home in the world in Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 6–10.
18. Some authors such as Frederick Olafson take this individuated aspect to establish a new form of individuality. See Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Olafson, "Being, Truth and Presence in Heidegger's Thought," *Inquiry* 41, no. 1 (1998): 45–64.
19. Thomas King, *The Truth About Stories* (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2003).
20. *Ibid.*, 45–46.
21. *Ibid.*, 53.
22. *Ibid.*, 41–42, 53.
23. *Ibid.*, 53.
24. Bernet takes *das Man*-self to be a "pseudo-self." This view is incorrect on two fronts—firstly it fails to acknowledge the necessity of *das Man* for Dasein's self-relation; and secondly it positions authenticity as a true self. Bernet, "Phenomenological Reduction," 173.
25. Such falling is described as "alienating" (BT 177–78).
26. "The fundamental possibilities of Dasein, which are always my own, show themselves in Anxiety as they are, undistorted [*unverstellt*] by innerworldly beings to which Dasein, initially and for the most part clings" (BT 191).
27. Raffoul argues that this individuated self in fact allows genuine *mitsein*, since it is only as "this singular being that I am with others." Raffoul, *Heidegger and the Subject*, trans. David Pettigrew and Gregory Recco (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1998), 215. On this view the *solus ipse* is an openness to being and others, and not something closed off in itself like the Cartesian subject. This is a view with which I have some sympathy. In *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* Heidegger says, "being-with-one-another is not a tenacious intrusion of the I upon the thou, derived from their common concealed helplessness; instead, existence as together and with one another is founded on the genuine individuation of the individual, determined by enpresenting in the sense of the instant. Individuation does not mean clinging obstinately to one's own private wishes but being free for the factual possibilities of current existence" (BP 288). Cf. Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, 21.

28. Jean-François Courtine describes it this way: "insofar as it serves as a touchstone of Mineness, death represents a particularly significant existential phenomenon: it opens the space inside which the 'they' may be checkmated." Courtine, "Voice of Conscience and Call of Being," in *Who Comes After the Subject*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (London: Routledge, 1991), 85. Such a view positions authentic Dasein in a transcendent domain over against *das Man*. While the two are not reconcilable, as the discussion of conscience makes clear, this does not put them in some kind of life and death struggle.
29. "This individuating is a way in which the 'there' is disclosed for existence" (BT 263). See Peg Birmingham, "Ever Respectfully Mine: Heidegger on Agency and Responsibility," in *Ethics in Danger: Contemporary Currents in Continental Thought*, ed. Arleen Dallery and Charles Scott (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 273.
30. The unmediated singularity of Dasein's confrontation with death is an inversion of the beginning of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where the singular object of experience could not be expressed in its immediacy.
31. "Death does not just 'belong' to one's own Dasein in an undifferentiated [*indifferent*] way, death *lays claim* [*beanspruchet*] to it as an *individuated* [*Einzelnes*] Dasein" (BT 263). "[Death] makes manifest that all Being-together-with [*Sein bei*] the things with which we concern ourselves, and all Being-with [*Mitsein*] Others will fail us when our ownmost potentiality-for-Being is the issue" (BT 263).
32. The quotation continues by emphasizing the role of *das Man* on the care structure of Dasein: "In-being is not a 'between' of real entities but the being of Dasein itself to which a world belongs and at any given time and which for the time being is mine, and first and foremost is the Anyone [*das Man*]" (HCT 252).
33. In *Being and Time* Heidegger says: "As care, Dasein *is* the 'between'" (BT 374). By this he means that Dasein is unable to be seen as a subject over and against an object.
34. See the discussion of this issue in Daniel Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Conception of Truth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 227.
35. See the suggestive paper by Pierre Keller and David Weberman, "Heidegger and the Sources of Intelligibility," *Continental Philosophy Review* 31, no. 4 (1998): 369–86. For a more detailed but idiosyncratic view, see Steven Crowell, "Subjectivity: Locating the First-Person in *Being and Time*," *Inquiry* 44, no. 4 (2001): 433–54.
36. See the discussion in Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. Kathleen Blamey (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), chap. 10. He traces the alternative nonmoral reading of conscience from Hegel to Nietzsche.
37. "In order to find itself at all, it must be 'shown' to itself in its possible authenticity. In terms of its possibility Dasein is already a potentiality-for-Being-itself, but it needs to have that potentiality attested [*Bezeugung*]" (BT 268).
38. "When the call is understood with an existentiell kind of hearing, such understanding is more authentic the more non-relationally Dasein hears and understands its own-Being appealed to, and the less the meaning of the call gets perverted by what one says or by what is fitting and accepted" (BT 280).

39. "We take calling as a mode of discourse. Discourse articulates intelligibility" (BT 271).
40. The attesting is an understanding but cannot be a knowing, since guilt is more primordial than knowing (BT 286).
41. "The caller is Dasein in its uncanniness: primordial, thrown Being-in-the-world as the 'not-at-home'—the bare 'that-it is' in the 'nothing' of the world" (BT 276).
42. "With Dasein's lostness in '*das Man*,' that factual potentiality-for-Being which is closest to it (the tasks, rules, and standards, the urgency and extent of concerned and solicitous Being-in-the-world) has already been decided upon" (BT 268).
43. For a detailed and compelling discussion of this issue, see Eric Boedecker, "Individual and Community in Early Heidegger: Situating *Das Man*, the *Man*-Self, and Self-Ownership in Dasein's Ontological Structure," *Inquiry* 44, no. 1 (2001): 63–100, esp. 65.
44. The divided or cohabited character of Dasein is emphasized in this passage: "the appeal to the self in the *Man*-self does not force it inwards upon itself so that it can close itself off from the external world" (BT 273).
45. "'Resoluteness' signifies letting oneself be summoned from one's lostness in the 'They'" (BT 299).
46. "As being, it has taken the definite form of a potentiality-for-being which has heard itself and has devoted itself to itself, but *not* as itself" (BT 284).
47. This view goes against the reading of someone like Steven Crowell who conceives conscience as overly rationalistic and has trouble, I think, making sense of the alienness and yet proximity of the call. See Crowell, "Conscience and Reason: Heidegger and the Ground of Intentionality," in *Transcendental Heidegger*, ed. Stephen Crowell and Jeff Malpas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).
48. He sees this projecting of ourselves in our possibilities "as a becoming manifest of the self" not through some "self-contemplation in the sense of the ego; rather the projection is the way in which I am the possibility; it is the way in which I exist freely" (BP 277). See also BT 12.
49. See the discussion of these issues in Birmingham, "Ever Respectfully Mine," 119.
50. Crowell in "Conscience and Reason" takes this to be the moment where the space of reasons can be made into Dasein's reasons, as they become reasons for being. This is an interesting argument but it is hard to see how guilt transforms those "reasons." Being the basis of a nullity does not, I think, bridge the space of reasons-individuation dualism and I am not sure Heidegger wants it to.
51. A number of authors draw attention to the similarities between autonomy and this discussion of guilt and resoluteness: see Francois Dastur, "The Call of Conscience: The Most Intimate Alterity," in *Heidegger and Practical Philosophy*, ed. François Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany: SUNY Press, 2002), esp. 93; Olafson, *Heidegger and the Ground of Ethics*, 47; Herman Philipse, "Heidegger and Ethics," *Inquiry* 42, no. 4 (1999): 439–74; and Crowell, "Subjectivity," 444–48. My argument here is that they are not structurally similar.
52. See the discussion of the spontaneity-receptivity distinction in Heidegger, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Logic*, trans. Michael Heim (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

53. See the discussion by Terry Pinkard, "What Is a 'Shape of Spirit'?" in *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: A Critical Guide*, ed. Dean Moyar and Michale Quante (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 112–29.
54. In recent years there have been a number of interpretations that have stressed this tension: see, for example, Dominique Janicaud, "The Question of Subjectivity in Heidegger's *Being and Time*"; and Rudi Visker, "Dropping—the 'Subject' of Authenticity." Both of these papers are in *Deconstructive Subjectivities*. See also Pippin, *Idealism as Modernism: Hegelian Variations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Philipse, "Heidegger and Ethics"; and Crowell, "Subjectivity."
55. *Das Man* determines the "the tasks, rules and standards, the urgency and extent, of concerned and solicitous Being-in-the-world" (BT 268).

5. DERRIDA AND THE QUESTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

1. Jacques Derrida, "Eating Well," in *Who Comes After the Subject*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (London: Routledge, 1991), 102.
2. See Vincent Descombes, *Modern French Philosophy* trans. L. Scott Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); and Bruce Baugh, *French Hegel* (London: Routledge, 2003). These two authors take very different interpretations of the influence of Hegel on poststructuralism; nevertheless, they still see the development of poststructuralism as a response to Hegel. See also the important work by Judith Butler, *Subjects of Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).
3. Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 48.
4. See his dialogue with Richard Kearney in *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 124.
5. Numerous authors have also been concerned to defend Hegel from such claims, thereby enabling a more productive exchange between these thinkers; see, for example, Stephen Houlgate, "Hegel, Derrida, and Restricted Economy: The Case of Mechanical Memory," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 34, no. 1 (1996): 79–93; Karin de Boer, "Différance as Negativity: The Hegelian Remains of Derrida's Philosophy," in *A Companion to Hegel*, ed. Michael Baur and Stephen Houlgate (Cambridge: Blackwell, 2011).
6. In his well-known essay "From Restricted to General Economy," Derrida says that the *Aufhebung* "signifies the busying of a discourse losing its breath as it reappropriates all negativity for itself, . . . thereby blinding itself to the *baselessness of the nonmeaning* from which the basis of meaning is drawn." Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 257, my emphasis.
7. Derrida, "Eating Well," 102–3.
8. Ibid.
9. Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. David B. Allison (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 102.

5. DERRIDA AND THE QUESTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

10. *Relevé* is the French translation of *aufheben*. See Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 15, for a very similar claim about self-consciousness. See also Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 12.
11. Derrida, *Positions*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 43.
12. *Ibid.*, 40–41.
13. *Ibid.*, 27. See also *ibid.*, 8–9.
14. *Ibid.*, 29.
15. Interview with Derrida in Richard Kearney, *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 125.
16. Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 168.
17. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, ed. John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 14.
18. Derrida, *Positions*, 29, my emphasis.
19. Rudolf Bernet, “The Other in Myself,” in *Deconstructive Subjectivities*, ed. Simon Critchley and Peter Dews (Albany: SUNY Press, 1996), 177.
20. Derrida, *Positions*, 28.
21. Derrida, “Eating Well,” 100.
22. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 13–14.
23. See the discussion in David Wood, *Thinking After Heidegger* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002), chaps. 5, 8, and 9.
24. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 14.
25. Jacques Derrida, “Desistance,” introduction to Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics*, trans. Christopher Fynsk (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 16n9; see also Derrida, “Eating Well,” 106.
26. Derrida, “Desistance,” 5.
27. “It is a singularity that dislocates or divides itself in gathering itself together to answer to the other, whose call somehow precedes its own identification with itself, for to this call I can *only* answer.” Derrida, “Eating Well,” 100.
28. *GD* 60. The passage in Hegel to which this alludes is PhS §97/GW9 72: “We thereby of course do not *represent* the universal ‘this’ or ‘being as such,’ but we *express* the universal, or in this sense—certainty we do not at all say what we *mean*.”
29. Derrida, *Aporias*, 19, my emphasis; cf. *ibid.*, 12, 38.
30. “I cannot respond to the call, the request, the obligation of another without sacrificing the other other, the other others” (*GD* 68).
31. See *GD* 92. There are numerous other places throughout this and other texts where he criticizes this notion.
32. Derrida, *Positions*, 44.
33. There are repeated references to this in *The Gift of Death*; see *GD* 63, 88, 92, 95.
34. Derrida, *Aporias*, 19. Derrida goes on to explain that the relation between the limit, that is, the singular, and the economy is an experience of aporia. In the next sentence he says: “The affirmation that announced itself through a negative form was therefore the necessity

5. DERRIDA AND THE QUESTION OF SUBJECTIVITY

- of *experience* itself, the experience of *aporia* . . . as endurance or passion, as interminable resistance or remainder.”
35. Ibid., 17.
 36. For example, he says that the idea of duty “is never simply given, that its status is not even that of a regulative idea in the Kantian sense, but rather something that remains to be thought and to come.” Ibid., 19.
 37. For a discussion of the Kant-Derrida relation on this issue, see Olivia Custer, “Kant and Derrida: Inventing Oneself out of an Impossible Choice,” in *Kant After Derrida*, ed. Philip Rothfield (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2003), 171–204.
 38. See Derrida, “The Politics of Friendship,” *Journal of Philosophy* 85, no. 11 (1988): 634.
 39. Derrida, *Aporias*, 16.
 40. See the clear account of this issue in Paul Patton, “Future Politics,” in *Between Derrida and Deleuze*, ed. Paul Patton and John Protevi (London: Continuum, 2003), 15–29.
 41. Caputo, *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*, 16–17, my emphasis.
 42. Heidegger argues that we are singular in the confrontation with death, and that this singularity is the defining feature of Dasein’s mineness, a notion only fulfilled in the confrontation with death. Levinas does not accept this: for him the singular is not first or discovered as mine, as a responsibility for myself; rather, the other comes first. God in the Abraham story is this other that comes first.
 43. See M 77. In an interview Derrida comments: “that which I am calling schema or image, that which links the concept to intuition, installs the virile figure at the determinative center of the subject, authority and autonomy . . . are through this schema attributed to man (*homo* and *vir*) rather than to woman.” Derrida, “Eating Well,” 114.
 44. See Derrida, “Original Discussion of *Différance*,” in *Derrida and Différance*, ed. David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 95.
 45. Trace has a negative similarity to *Aufhebung*. See the discussion of this issue in Wood, *Thinking After Heidegger*, 28.
 46. See Derrida, *Positions*, 8–9.
 47. See M 39.
 48. The traditional metaphysical reading of Hegel argues that the aspiration for the unconditioned remains the guiding thread of Hegel’s thought and so governs the goal of reason. At one level I think this is correct; it is just that this unconditioned has to be understood not as some fixed character of an object, the world, or spirit, but as *self-determining* spirit itself.
 49. See the very helpful analysis of these issues in his discussion of John McDowell in Pippin, *The Persistence of Subjectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), chap. 9, esp. 218–20.
 50. Ibid., 12.
 51. See, for example, PhS §32/GW9 25–26.
 52. See also EnL §42z1.
 53. See Pippin, *The Persistence of Subjectivity*, chap. 2.

6. THE DIALECTIC AND TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICISM

54. I explore this in more detail in Lumsden, "Philosophy and the Logic of Modernity: Hegel's Dissatisfied Spirit," *Review of Metaphysics* 65, no. 1 (2009): 55–89.
55. For a detailed discussion see Lumsden, "Absolute Knowing," *Owl of Minerva* 30, no. 1 (Fall 1998): 3–32.
56. See the important works: Frederick Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel's Social Theory: Actualizing Freedom* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000); Robert Pippin, *Hegel's Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Terry Pinkard, *Hegel's Naturalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
57. I explore this complex issue in "Philosophy and the Logic of Modernity: Hegel's Dissatisfied Spirit."
58. Derrida, *Aporias*, 20, citing Derrida, *The Other Heading: Reflections on Today's Europe*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 80–81. In *The Gift of Death* he describes Hegel's dialectic as a "speculation on every secret." GD 83.
59. This is where my interpretation differs in particular from Pinkard's and Brandom's. See Lumsden, "Satisfying the Demands of Reason: Hegel's Conceptualization of Experience," *Topoi* 21, no. 1 (2003): esp. 48–53.
60. See the discussion of this issue in Terry Pinkard, "Virtues, Morality and Sittlichkeit," *European Journal of Philosophy* 7, no. 2 (1999): 217–38; and Pinkard, *German Philosophy*, chap. 10.
61. Derrida, *Aporias*, 32.

6. THE DIALECTIC AND TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICISM

1. DR 58/81.
2. See DR 131–34/171–75; and NP 103.
3. DR 265/341.
4. DR 266/342.
5. This claim is repeated in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. See NP 4. See also Bruce Baugh, "Transcendental Empiricism: Deleuze's Response to Hegel," *Man and World* 25, no. 2 (1992): 133–48.
6. See DR 150/194.
7. The most comprehensive statement of this approach is Anne Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze: L'Empirisme Transcendental* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009).
8. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 283.
9. Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), reproduces this view without any serious examination of Hegel's views of self-consciousness or dialectic.
10. See Catherine Malabou, "Who's Afraid of Hegelian Wolves?," in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. Paul Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 120–21.

11. Deleuze's anti-Hegelian interpretation has been criticized by a number of commentators: Daniel Breazeale, "The Hegel-Nietzsche Problem," *Nietzsche-Studien* 4 (1975): 146–64; Stephen Houlgate, *Hegel, Nietzsche and the Critique of Metaphysics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Robert Williams, *Tragedy, Recognition, and the Death of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).
12. Hegel's critique of the reign of terror in the *Philosophy of Right* offers a similar argument. He argues the identity that the reign of terror seeks to establish is a purely negative expression of the will. See PR §5z.
13. See Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze, Hegel, and the Post-Kantian Tradition," in *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 43–58.
14. See NP 3–5.
15. Bruce Baugh in his "Transcendental Empiricism" understands Deleuze's empiricism as a form of classical empiricism. For a different take on Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, see Levi Bryant, *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze's Transcendental Ontology* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2008).
16. Deleuze, "A Philosophical Concept . . .," in *Who Comes After the Subject?* ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), 95.
17. For a thorough reappraisal of this issue in Hegel and German idealism, see Paul Redding, *The Logic of Affect* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), chaps. 4–7.
18. Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 335.
19. "Thought sublates the immediacy with which the object at first confronts us and thus converts the object into a positedness; but this its positedness is its being-in-and-for-self, or its objectivity." SL 585/GW12 14.
20. For an extended discussion of this issue, see Lumsden, "Philosophy and the Logic of Modernity: Hegel's Dissatisfied Spirit," *Review of Metaphysics* 65, no. 1 (2009): 55–89; and the exceptional analysis of the dialectic in Angelica Nuzzo, "Dialectic as Logic of Transformative Processes," in *Hegel: New Directions*, ed. Katerina Deligiorgi (Chesham: Acumen, 2006), 85–104.
21. Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 183.
22. This is why much of the recent discussion of Hegel's thought, which frames it in terms of sociality of reason, appeals to Sellars's idea of the space of reasons to assist them in this.
23. Robert Pippin, *The Persistence of Subjectivity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12.
24. This does not mean that we can of course understand everything and everyone within modern life as at home. Hegel's well-known discussion of poverty makes this clear; moreover, there are a number of pathologies that play themselves out through the experience of either being left behind by changes in norms or the failure of these changes to actually correct what was indeterminate in a given society. For a discussion of this, see Axel Honneth, *Suffering from Indeterminacy: An Attempt at a Reactualization of "Hegel's Philosophy of Right"* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2000).

6. THE DIALECTIC AND TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICISM

25. See chapter 2 of *Difference and Repetition*. For a good overview of these issues in *The Logic of Sense* and in *Difference and Repetition*, see Sean Bowden, *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's Logic of Sense* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).
26. There are connections to romanticism that I do not explore in this book. See the discussion of Schelling and Deleuze in James Dodd, "Expression in Schelling's Early Philosophy," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 27, no. 2 (2006): 109–39.

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INDEX

- Absolute knowing, 35, 206
- Absoluteness, 160
- Absolute spirit, 1
- Abstract formal ego, 202
- Acting, 47–50
- Aenesidemus* (Schulze), 38, 43–47
- Allison, Henry, 74
- Antinomy, 82
- Anxiety, 115–21; death-anxiety, 120; as
 - motivation for philosophical inquiry, 118;
 - the negative and, 136–37;
 - self-certainty and, 118;
 - signification and, 116
- Aporias* (Derrida), 150, 172, 239n34
- Appearances, 73; thing-in-itself compared to, 75
- Apperception: for Hegel, 84–85; for Kant, 12, 34, 49, 87–88; knowledge and, 77; limitations of, 205; self-consciousness and, 85–86, 99–102; supra-oppositional quality of, 205; transcendental unity of, 87–88, 204–5; unifying function of, 84–85
- Apperceptive ego, 34
- Aquinas, Thomas, 10
- Aristotle, 67
- Aufhebung*, *see* Sublation
- Authenticity: as contentless, 119; Dasein and, 115–21, 129–30, 235n14; inauthenticity compared to, 116–17, 127; *das Man* and, 112–15
- Authentic self, conscience and, 126–32
- Authority: of rationality, 3; of reason, 2–7
- Autonomy: for Derrida, 149–58; for Descartes, 110; for Hegel, 16–17, 105; for Kant, 5–6, 17, 62–64; of normative, 58; reason under, 6; self-legislated freedom and, 6
- Bad conscience, 190
- Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Heidegger), 26–27, 30, 235n27
- Baugh, Bruce, 242n15
- Being, for Descartes, 28–29
- Being and Time* (Heidegger), 10–13, 26, 30; analysis of death in, 118–19; autonomy in, 110; care in, 111, 122, 124; idealism in, 31–32; *see also* Dasein

- "Being-there," *see* Dasein
 Bernet, Rudolf, 147, 234n8
 Bandom, Robert, 209
- Call, of conscience, 127–28, 236n38
 Care: in *Being and Time*, 111, 122, 124;
 context of signification through, 124;
 Dasein and, 114–15, 121–26; definitions
 of, 111, 123–24; elements of, 123; spirit
 and, 125; structure of, 111–12, 133
 Causality, in nature, 3, 83
 Causal materialism, 4
 Chaos, 188
 the Check, 229n44, 229n46; not-I com-
 pared to, 53–54; rationality of, 61; revi-
 sion of, 60; self-positing subject and,
 51–57, 59; striving subject and, 61
 Cognition: constitution of, 44–45;
 division of, 17–18; elements of, 76;
 inaccessibility of, 72; intuition's role
 in, 203; limitations of, 74–75; thing-
 in-itself and, 160; *see also* Knowledge;
 Thought
 Common sense, 183–84
 the Concept: auto-insemination of,
 139–40; constraints on, 204; dialecti-
 cal movement of, 172; dichotomy
 of, 78; identification of, 19; intuition
 and, 40–41, 49, 172–73; limitation of
 thought and, 159; realization of, for
 Hegel, 100–101, 143; as self-deter-
 mined, 203
 Concept/intuition model, 162; dualism
 of, 72, 109, 173, 203–4; for Kant, 212;
 for self-positing subject, 164
 Conscience: authentic self and, 126–32;
 bad, 190; call of, 127–28, 236n38;
 Dasein and, 112, 126; for Heidegger,
 128; for Kant, 128; self-comprehension
 and, 130; subjectivity and, 133
 Consciousness: dual character of, 42–43;
 experience and, 91, 98; finitude of, 59;
 limitations of, 164–65; objects and,
 relation to, 93; otherness and, 103;
 paradox of, 56–57; principles of, 44–45;
 purpose of, 96–97; reconciliation with
 self-consciousness, 233n36; represen-
 tational, 45–46, 80; as self-correcting,
 168; self-determination without, 83;
 shapes of, 97; unification of, 143
 Conscious subject, 102
 Counter-positing, 51–52
 Courtine, Jean-François, 236n28
 Critical rationality, 3
Critique of Pure Reason (Kant), 17, 74, 200
 Crowell, Steven, 237n47
- Dasein ("being-there"), 10–13, 27–28, 30;
 anxiety and, 115–21; authenticity and,
 115–21, 129–30, 235n14; as "Being-in,"
 122; care and, 114–15, 121–26; cohab-
 ited character of, 237n44; conscience
 and, 112, 126; death and, 120, 240n42;
 definitions of attributes, 117; estab-
 lishment of, 234n5; guilt and, 128,
 131; inauthentic modes of, 113–14;
 individuation and, 115–21, 128, 131–32;
 lack of independence from world,
 121–22; as losing of oneself, 121; *das*
 Man and, 113–14, 236n28; *Man*-self in,
 114, 131; possibilities of, 235n26; refer-
 ential totality, 119; signification and,
 112; subjectivity compared to, 140–41;
 thrownness and, 126, 129–31; uncanni-
 ness and, 128, 131–32; world and, 34
 Death: analysis of, 118–19; Dasein and,
 120, 240n42; existential, 119–20; for
 Heidegger, 118–20, 240n42
 Death-anxiety, 120
 Deconstruction, 144
 Deleuze, Gilles, 2, 178, 188; common
 sense for, 183–84; critique of Hegel,
 195–96; critique of *Phenomenology of*
 Spirit, 181–82; critique of subject for,

- 186–89; difference for, 213; dogmatism for, 177; genuine thinking for, 185; haecceity for, 188–89; ideas for, 194; individuation for, 178–89, 195; Kantian influences on, 199–206; language choice for, 215–16; on limitations of modern philosophy, 178; limits of philosophical tradition, 8; “path of despair” for, 180; repetition for, 181–82; self-consciousness for, 184; self-determination for, 216; sensations for, 185; on “Sense-Certainty,” 193–94; on sense-experience, 179–86; sensibility for, 185–86; spontaneity for, 211–12; subjectivity for, 211–12, 214; sublation and, 191–92; thing-in-itself for, 92, 212; *see also* *Difference and Repetition*; *Nietzsche and Philosophy*
- Derrida, Jacques, 2, 19–20; autonomy for, 149–58; critique of Heidegger, 148–49; différance for, 20, 24; ethics systems for, limitations of, 151; on Hegelian mind/world dualism, 163; limits of philosophical tradition, 8; responsibility for, 149–58, 171–76; self-present subject for, 143–45; self-sufficiency for, 167; singularity for, 149–58, 171–76; sublation for, 238n6; unified subject and, 145–49; *see also* Sublation
- Derrida, Jacques, works of: *Aporias*, 150, 172, 239n34; “The Force of Law,” 155; *The Gift of Death*, 150, 172; *Margins of Philosophy*, 19–20; *Speech and Phenomena*, 141–42; *Writing and Difference*, 19–20
- Descartes, René, 67; autonomy for, 110; being for, 28–29; early metaphysics for, 142; *ego cogito* for, 11, 26, 32, 217; external world for, 29; knowing subject for, 26–33; methodology of mathematics, 29; modern philosophy and, 10, 142, 217; ontological concepts for, influences on, 10; scientific method for, 29; on self-consciousness, 11; self-perception for, 201; *subjectum* for, 10, 31; *see also* Dasein
- Descombes, Vincent, 13
- Dialectic: in *Difference and Repetition*, 191; the negative in, 187; in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, critique of, 191
- Différance*, 20, 24; conceptual architectonic of, 158–59; as deferred, 145; definition of, 144; the negative and, 144; objectivity and, 147; as quasi-transcendental, 174–76; re-conception of subjectivity, 146–47; responsibility and, 152–53
- Difference, 6; conceptualization of, 194; for Deleuze, 213; establishment of, 184–85; individuation and, 187–88
- Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze), 178, 181–82; Dialectic in, 191; self-consciousness in, 189–90; subjectivity in, 187
- Differenzschrift* (Hegel), 81–83, 90
- Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge, *see* *Wissenschaftslehre*
- Dogmatism: critique of, 41–43, 219–20; for Deleuze, 177; modernity as influence on, 208
- Doubt, 94; in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 160
- Drive, 62
- Ego: abstract formal, 202; apperceptive, 34; in modern philosophy, 10–11; normativity of, 58; transcendental, 200; worldlessness of, 134
- Ego cogito*, 11, 26; representational character of, 32; self-certainty of, 217; self-consciousness and, 218; self-determination and, 218; self-reflection and, 218
- Empirical self, 201

- Empiricism: explanatory potential of, 198; Lockean, 73; natural world and, 73; purpose of, 88–89; rationalism and, 39, 88–89, 202–3; “Sense-Certainty” and, 182; transcendental, 187, 193–99; universals in, 89
- Encyclopedia Logic*, 85, 88
- Encyclopedia Philosophy of Mind*, 66–67, 89
- the Enlightenment: fulfillment of ideals of, 177; German idealism and, 5; romanticism as critique of, 6–8
- Enlightenment rationality, 2–4; post-structuralism and, 6; romanticism and, 6
- Epistemology: appearances in, 73; for Kant, limitations of, 68–78; thing-in-itself and, 73
- Ethical life, 134
- Ethical systems, 151; justice and, 171; under Kantian terms, 154
- Ethics, transformation of, 157
- Existential death, 119–20; individuation and, 120
- Experience: dialectical movement in, 91–92; extraconceptual content of, 90; for Hegel, 77–78, 85, 88–96; intuited content of, 78; natural consciousness and, 91, 98; objectivity in, 85; in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 77–78, 166; pre-understandings and, 161; self-consciousness and, 104–5; sense-experience, 179–86
- Fact-act (*Tathandlung*), as philosophical principle, 49–50
- Faith and Knowledge* (Hegel), 76, 82–83, 89
- Feeling, self-positing subject and, 54–56
- Fichte, Johann Gottlieb, 61, 231n74; acting for, 47–50; active subject for, 46; the check for, 51–57, 59–61, 229n44, 229n46; critique of dogmatism, 41–43; dogmatism for, 41–43; dualism of concept and intuition, 40–41; freedom for, 58; Hegel critique of, 78–83; idealism for, 41–43; limits of self-consciousness for, 79–80; normativity for, 57–60; “Review of *Aenesidemus*,” 43–47; self-positing subject for, 39, 52, 79; on spontaneity, 15–16; striving subject for, 57–65; subjectivity for, 70; theoretical knowledge for, 39; thing-in-itself for, 57–60; *see also Wissenschaftslehre*
- “The Force of Law” (Derrida), 155
- Freedom: autonomy and, 6; for Fichte, 58; limitation and, 62–64; in *Philosophy of Right*, 208; self-determined, 5; self-legislative quality of, 63, 69
- Freud, Sigmund, as influence on structuralism, 8
- Fritzsche, Johannes, 234n5
- Geist*, 69–70
- German idealism: absolute spirit and, 1; the Enlightenment and, 5; for Heidegger, 218; metaphysics of subjectivity and, 25; poststructuralism and, 2, 13–24; reason and, 5–6; subjectivity in, 1
- The Gift of Death* (Derrida), 150, 172
- God: as finite synthetic self, 177; norms under, modernity as influence on, 207–8
- Grundriss* (Fichte), 61
- Guilt, 128, 131
- Haecceity, 188–89
- Hartmann, Klaus, 70–71
- Hegel (Taylor), 69
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich: animated concepts of modernity for, 23; on anxiety, 135–36; apperception

- for, 84–85; autonomy for, 16–17, 105; Concept for, 100–101, 143; concept/intuition dualism for, 72, 173; concept/intuition model for, 72, 109, 173, 203–4; critique of Fichte, 78–83; critique of Kant, 71–72; Deleuze critique of, 195–96; empiricism for, 88; ethical life for, 134; experience for, 77–78, 85, 88–96; Heidegger critique of, 33–37; idealism for, 144; identification of concept, 19; identification of self-consciousness, 19, 72; intuition for, 107–8, 161–62, 174; Kantian influences on, 199–206; language for, 172; metaphysical reading of, 240, 240n48; mind/world dualism of, 163; misrepresentations of, 21; modernity for, 23, 206–11; “Myth of the Noumenal,” 75–76; object for, 5–6; poststructuralism for, 71; on poverty, 242n24; presuppositions for, 182–83; reason for, 158–62; receptivity/spontaneity distinction for, 161–62; self-consciousness for, 35, 77–78, 104–9, 133, 165, 193–99; on self-correcting character of history, 21–22; self-determination for, 104–9, 210–11; self-present subject for, 143–45; self-producing spirit for, 16, 105–6, 210–11; self-relation model, 68; spirit for, 104–9, 125; on spontaneity, 15–16; stations for, 94; structures of recognition for, 209; subject for, 5–6; subjectivity for, 1–2, 66–68, 86; sublation for, 20, 141–42; thing-in-itself for, 92, 212; transcendental empiricism for, 187, 193–99, 216; transformation of modern subject, 162–71; *see also* the Concept; the Negative
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, works of: *Differenzschrift*, 81–83, 90; *Faith and Knowledge*, 76, 82–83, 89; *Science of Logic*, 82, 87, 97, 104, 106; *see also* *Phenomenology of Spirit*, *Philosophy of Right*
- Hegel’s Logic, 77–78, 108, 139, 145, 158; absoluteness of, 160
- Heidegger, Martin: anxiety for, 115–21; authenticity for, 115–21; background of, 140–43; conscience for, 128; critique of Hegel, 33–37; critique of *das Man*, 115; on death, 118–20, 240n42; definition of world for, 27; Derrida critique of, 148–49; German idealism for, 218; history of metaphysics for, 8, 14; individuation for, 115–21; modern philosophy for, 218; ontic level for, 141; self-determination and, 111; subjectivity for, 111, 126; uncanniness for, 115–16; *see also* Dasein; *das Man*
- Heidegger, Martin, works of: *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, 26–27, 30, 235n27; *History of the Concept of Time*, 122; *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 32–33; *see also* *Being and Time*
- Henrich, Dieter, 80–81, 91, 228n23
- Heteronomy, 62–64
- History: as collective human project, 133–34; the self and, 101; self-correcting character of, 21–22
- History of the Concept of Time* (Heidegger), 122
- Hölderlin, Friedrich, 90–91, 220
- Honneth, Axel, 224n17
- Human beings, defining factors of, 117
- Human sciences, 3
- Hupokeimenon*, 30–32
- Hyppolite, Jean, 13
- I, as subject, *see* Self-positing subject
- Idealism: in *Being and Time*, 31–32; for Fichte, 41–43; for Hegel, 144; for Kant, 74, 90; in striving subject, 64; subjective, 86; *see also* German idealism

- Ideas: for Deleuze, 194; in individuating factors, 198
- Identity, as self-differentiating, 148
- Inaugural Dissertation* (Kant), 73–74, 76
- Inauthenticity, 113–14; authenticity compared to, 116–17
- Individuation, 115–21; chaos and, 188; Dasein and, 128, 131–32; for Deleuze, 178–89, 195; difference and, 187–88; existential death and, 120; forms of, 134–35; ideas and, 198; subjectivity and, 187; thrownness and, 126
- Intellect, 41
- Intellectual intuition, 47–51, 228n33, 230n64; spontaneity and, 51; in *Wissenschaftslehre*, 50
- Intuition: cognition and, 203; concept and, 40–41, 49, 172–73; experience and, 78; for Hegel, 107–8, 161–62, 174; Kantian, 203; knowledge and, 39–40, 78; limitations of, 55; preservation of, 175; self-comprehension and, 171; self-positing subject and, 43; sensory, 71; sensuous content of, 53; *see also* Concept/intuition model
- Jacobi, Friedrich Heinrich, 90
- Judgment, 211; objectivity of, 106; subject and, 12
- Justice, 155; ethical systems and, 171
- Kant, Immanuel, 17, 73–74, 76, 200; anthropocentrism of philosophy, 19; apperception and, 12, 34, 49, 87–88; autonomy for, 5–6, 17, 62–64; concept/intuition model and, 212; conscience for, 128; elements of cognition for, 76; epistemology for, limitations of, 68–78; ethical systems under, 154; experience of self for, 201–2; Hegel critique of, 71–72; idealism for, 74, 90; influence on Deleuze, 199–206; influence on Hegel, 199–206; intuition for, 203; limits on knowledge for, 74–77; model of mind for, 183–84; objectivity of, 164; romanticism and, 6; sensory intuition for, 71; subjectivity for, 11, 70, 84–88; thing-in-itself for, 73; *Wissenschaftslehre* and, 44
- Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* (Heidegger), 32–33
- King, Thomas, 116–17
- Knowing subject, 26–33; representational character of, 32, 103; self-consciousness and, 35
- Knowledge: apperception and, 77; as conditional, 22; intuitive content of, 39–40, 78; for Kant, 74–77; limitations of, 74–77; objective conditions for, 102–3; in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 92–93; standard theories, 72
- Kojève, Alexandre, 13
- Language: Deleuze use of, 215–16; features of, 172; self-world relations and, 213
- “Lectures Concerning the Scholars Vocation” (Fichte), 231n74
- Legitimation, of philosophy, 5–6
- Levinas, Emmanuel, 177, 261n42
- Liebniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 73
- Limitations: of cognition, 74–75; of epistemology, 68–78; of freedom, 62–64; freedom and, 62–64; of intuition, 55; of philosophical tradition, 8; of self-consciousness, 79–80; of self-positing subject, 52
- Locke, John, 73
- Logic and Existence* (Hyppolite), 13
- Maimon, Salomon, 90
- Malabou, Catherine, 190
- das Man*: authenticity and, 112–15; Dasein and, 113–14, 236n28; Heidegger

- critique of, 115; intelligibility and, 113; *Man*-self in, 114; as pseudo-self, 235n24; signification and, 113; sociality in, 110; translation of, 234n4
- Man*-self, 114, 131
- Margins of Philosophy* (Derrida), 19–20
- McDowell, John, 71
- Meaning, 9
- Metaphysics: for Descartes, 142; 18th century strands of, 73; for Heidegger, 8, 14; Nietzsche as end of, 34; pre-modern, 88; of presence, 9, 141; subject-centered trajectory of, 141
- Metaphysics of subjectivity, 1–2, 7–13; German idealism and, 25
- Model of mind, 183–84
- Modern French Philosophy* (Descombes), 13
- Modernity: dogmatism and, 208; emancipatory potential of, 2; for Hegel, 23, 206–11; norms and, 207–8; poststructuralism and, 7; self-comprehension and, 209; self-production and, 208; self-transformation and, 208; subjectivity and, 209; values and, 209
- Modern philosophy: Cartesian influences on, 10, 142, 217; ego in, 10–11; for Heidegger, 218; hierarchy of concepts in, 18; history of ontology in, 27; limitations of, for Deleuze, 178; metaphysics of the subject, 12–13; poststructuralism and, 18; self-consciousness and, 167–68; self-consciousness in, 14–15
- “Myth of the Noumenal,” 75–76
- Nancy, Jean-Luc, 225n31
- Naturalism, 41; rationality and, 73; self-positing subject and, 43
- Nature: causal domains of, 3, 83; empiricism and, 73; as mechanism, 3; rationalism and, 73
- the Negative, 135–37, 139, 166–67; anxiety and, 136–37; distorting effects of, 189–93; in Hegelian dialectic, 187; labor of, 168
- Nietzsche, Friedrich: critique of philosophical tradition, 199; end of metaphysics and, 34; poststructuralism influenced by, 8; social and political forces for, 190
- Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Deleuze), 178, 181–82; critique of dialectic in, 191; critique of subjectivity in, 190; self-consciousness in, 189; themes of, 191
- Nihilism, 190
- Normativity, 57–60; autonomy of, 58
- Norms: authority of, 220–21; modernity as influence on, 207–8; in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 221; in *Philosophy of Right*, 221
- Not-I, 52–55; the check compared to, 53–54; transition to self-positing subject, 55
- Object: certainty of, 217; consciousness and, relation to, 93; determination of reality of, by subject, 42–43; for Hegel, 5–6; opposition to subject, 30–31; sense-experience and, 179; subject compared to, 45
- Objectivity: *différance* and, 147; in experience, 85; of judgment, 106; of Kant, 164; of Logic, 107
- Occident, development of, 2
- Otherness, 6; consciousness and, 103
- “Path of despair,” 180
- Patočka, Jan, 178
- Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel), 12–13, 17, 36, 89; Deleuze critique of, 181–82; development of thought in, 82; doubt in, 160; experience in, 77–78, 166; knowing in, 107; knowledge in,

- Phenomenology of Spirit* (Hegel)
(continued)
92–93; norms in, 221; as project of self-comprehension, 196–97; self-consciousness in, 66, 84, 96–104, 195; self-examination in, 93–94; self-producing spirit in, 169; self-relation in, 68; “Sense-Certainty” in, 94–95, 98, 179–82; subjectivity in, 67, 97; transformation of knowing, 103
- Philosophy: fact-act (*Tathandlung*) in, 49–50; French thought, 139; history of, 2; legitimation of, 5–6; post-structuralism in development of, 18, 224n17; pre-Platonic, 31–32; principles of, 46; purpose of, 170–71; recognitive model, 184; reflective, 82–83; representation in, 191–93; subjective idealism in, 86; *see also* Modern philosophy
- Philosophy of Right* (Hegel), 17, 166;
freedom in, 208; norms in, 221; self-consciousness in, 66
- Pinkard, Terry, 106, 209, 230n56, 230n64
- Pippin, Robert, 57, 165, 209–10
- Pity, 190
- Poststructuralism: critique of Enlightenment and, 6; critique of subjectivity, 8; in development of philosophy, 18, 224n17; Enlightenment rationality and, 6; Freud as influence on, 8; German idealism and, 2, 13–24; modernity and, 7; modern philosophy and, 18; modes of questioning, 8; Nietzsche as influence on, 8; structuralism as influence on, 8–9
- Poverty, 242n24
- Pre-understandings, 161
- The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (Weber), 2
- Rationality: of the check, 61; critical, 3; empiricism and, 39, 88–89, 202–3; Enlightenment, 2–4; Leibnizian, 73; natural world and, 73; romanticism and, 220; unifying authority of, 3; universal, 2–3; *see also* Reason
- Realism, 41; in striving subject, 64
- Reason: authority of, 2–7; under autonomy, 6; capacity for self-correction, 105, 108, 174–75, 209; German idealism and, 5–6; for Hegel, 158–62; as limitless, 4; as mode of thought, 109; positive role of, 162; as self-grounding, 4–5, 105; subject and, 12, 35; uncritical attitudes toward, 4
- Recognition, 190, 192–93; structures of, 209
- Reflective philosophy, 82–83; weakness of, 228n23
- Reinhold, Karl, 44, 46; representational model of consciousness, 80
- Religion, 101
- Repetition, 181–82
- Representational consciousness, 45–46, 80
- Representationalism, 11, 15; as force, 190; as philosophical program, 191–93; problems of, 30–33; subject in opposition to object, 30–31
- Responsibility: aporetic structure of, 154–57; for Derrida, 149–58, 171–76; *différance* and, 152–53; formulation of, 152–53; messianic character of, 156–57; singularity and, 154; as unconditioned, 155
- Ressentiment*, 190
- Romanticism: as critique of the Enlightenment, 6–8; defining problem of, 6; Kant and, 6; rationality and, 220
- Saussure, Ferdinand de, 147–48
- Schelling, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph, 67, 90
- Schulze, G. E., 38, 43–47
- Science, self-consciousness and, 96
- Science of Logic* (Hegel), 82, 87, 97, 104, 106

- Scientific materialism, 3
- Scientific method, 29
- the Self: empirical, 201; in external world, 101; for Kant, 201–2
- Self-certainty: anxiety and, 118; of *ego cogito*, 217; of subject, 31–32
- Self-comprehension, 21; conscience and, 130; expanded notion of, 34–35; intuition and, 171; modernity and, 209; in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 196–97; as representational, 80; transformation of, 162
- Self-consciousness: absolute knowing and, 35, 206; apperception and, 85–86, 99–102; for Deleuze, 184; for Descartes, 11; in *Difference and Repetition*, 189–90; *ego cogito* and, 218; experience and, 104–5; for Fichte, 79–80; for Hegel, 35, 77–78, 104–9, 133, 165, 189–90, 193–99; identification of, 19, 72; in modern philosophy, 14–15; modern philosophy and, 167–68; in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 189; in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 66, 84, 96–104, 195; in *Philosophy of Right*, 66; re-conception of, 88; reconciliation with Consciousness, 233n36; rise of, 18; science and, 96; self-positing subject and, 40; spirit as expansion of, 163; sublation and, 143; traditional accounts of, 47–48; as transcendental, 14–15; transcendental sensibility of, 197–98; transformation of subject into, 33–34
- Self-correction: reason and, 105, 108, 174–75, 209; as self-determined, 70
- Self-determination: the Concept as, 203–4; without consciousness, 83; for Deleuze, 216; *ego cogito* and, 218; for Hegel, 104–9, 210–11; for Heidegger, 111; striving subject and, 9, 63
- Self-examination, in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 93–94
- Self-identical subject, 192
- Self-legislated freedom, 6, 69
- Self-perception, 201
- Self-positing subject, 47–49; as act of self-intuition, 43; the check and, 51–57; concept/intuition dualism for, 164; counter-positing and, 51–52; development of, 39; for Fichte, 39, 52, 79; limitations of, 52; naturalism and, 43; principles of, 48; role of feeling for, 54–56; self-affection for, 54–55; self-consciousness and, 40; self-determination of, 58; transformation of, 58; in *Wissenschaftslehre*, 50
- Self-present subject, 143–45
- Self-producing spirit: for Hegel, 16, 105–6, 210–11; in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 169; theodicy and, 16
- Self-production, 208
- Self-reflection, 200–201; *ego cogito* and, 218
- Self-relation, 68; “Sense-Certainty” and, 98
- Self-transformation, 208
- Self-world relations, 211–16; language structures and, 213
- Sellars, Willard, 93
- Sensations, 185
- “Sense-Certainty,” 94–95; Deleuze on, 193–94; empiricism and, 182; self-relation and, 98
- Sense-experience, 179–86; object singularity and, 179
- Sensibility, 164, 185–86; transcendental, 197–98
- Sensory intuition, 71
- Signification, 113; anxiety and, 116; through care, 124
- Singularity, 6; for Derrida, 149–58, 171–76; responsibility and, 154; in sense-experience, 179; stability of, 153; transformation of ethics and, 157

- Sociality, 101; in *das Man*, 110
- Socrates, 208
- Sophocles, 210
- Speech and Phenomena* (Derrida), 141–42
- Spinoza, Baruch, 67
- Spinozism, 41
- Spirit, 16; absolute, 1; care and, 125; as expansion of self-consciousness, 163; for Hegel, 104–9, 125; self-transformation of, 136; *see also* Self-producing spirit
- Spontaneity: for Deleuze, 211–12; expansion of, 15–16; intellectual intuition and, 51; receptivity/spontaneity distinction, 161–62
- Stations, 94
- Striving subject, 57–65; the check and, 61; idealistic elements of, 64; as infinite, 62; realistic elements of, 64; self-determination and, 63; unifying function of, 60–65
- Structuralism, as influence on poststructuralism, 8–9
- Subject: as active, 46; conscious, 102; critique of, 186–89; defining elements of, 12; division of, 147; as fable, 138; for Hegel, 5–6; instability of, 170; judgment and, 12; knowing, 26–33; modern transformation of, 162–71; object compared to, 45; opposition to object, 30–31; reality of object determined by, 42–43; reason and, 12, 35; self-certainty of, 31–32; self-consciousness and, 33–34; as self-determining, 9, 63; self-identical, 192; thought and, 12; unified, 145–49; *see also* Self-positing subject
- Subjective idealism, 86
- Subjectivity: as anti-reflective, 1; conscience and, 133; Dasein compared to, 140–41; for Deleuze, 211–12, 214; destabilization of, 8–9; *différance* and, 146–47; in *Différance and Repetition*, 187; for Fichte, 70; in German idealism, 1; for Hegel, 1–2, 66–68, 86; for Heidegger, 111, 126; individuation and, 187; for Kant, 11, 70, 84–88; libidinal forces and, 8; metaphysics of, 1–2, 7–13, 25; modernity and, 209; in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 190; in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 67, 97; post-structuralist critique of, 8
- Subjectum*, 10, 31
- Sublation (*Aufhebung*), 20, 141–42; Deleuze and, 191–92; for Derrida, 238n6; self-consciousness and, 143
- Taylor, Charles, 69–70, 201
- Theodicy, self-producing spirit and, 16
- Thing-in-itself, 57–60; appearances compared to, 75; cognition limits, 160; for Deleuze, 212; epistemology and, 73; Hegel critique of, 92, 212; for Kant, 73; revision of, 59
- Thought, 88–96; common sense and, 183–84; limitation of, 159; in *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 82; pre-understandings and, 161; reason and, 109; subject and, 12; transformation of, 174; understanding as component of, 76; unity of, 106; as unsettled, 108
- A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze), 188
- Thrownness, 126, 129–31
- Transcendental apperception, 87–88, 204–5
- Transcendental ego, 200
- Transcendental empiricism, 187, 193–99, 216
- “Transcendental Empiricism” (Baugh), 242n15
- Truth, as substance and subject, 69
- The Truth About Stories* (King), 116–17
- Uncanniness, 115–16, 128, 131–32

INDEX

- Understanding: pre-understandings and, 161; thought and, 76
- Unified subject, 145–49
- Universal rationality, 2–3
- Universals: in empiricism, 89; “I” as, 186–87
- Values, 209
- Wahl, Jean, 13
- Weber, Max, 2
- Western liberalism, 151–52
- Wissenschaftslehre* (Doctrine of Scientific Knowledge), 230n56; central antitheses in, 60–65; development of, 38; divisions within, 40; intellectual intuition and, 50; Kantian philosophy and, 44; normativity in, 57–60; self-positing subject in, 50; striving subject and, 57–65; thing-in-itself in, 57–60
- Writing and Difference* (Derrida), 19–20

